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(71) Applicant (for all designated States except US): MERCK & CO., INC. [US/US]; P.O. Box 2000, Rahway, NJ 07065-0907 (US).			
(72) Inventors; and (75) Inventors/Applicants (for US only): GRAHAM, Frank, L. [CA/CA]; 34 Amelia Street, Hamilton, Ontario L8P 2V4 (CA). PARKS, Robin [CA/CA]; Camelot Towers, Apt. 1217, 1001 Main Street West, Hamilton, Ontario L8S 1A9 (CA). NG, Philip [CA/CA]; 90 Rodney Boulevard, Guelph, Ontario N1G 2H3 (CA).			
(74) Agent: BENCEN, Gerard, H.; Bencen & Van Dyke, P.A., 1630 Hillcrest Street, Orlando, FL 32803 (US).			

(54) Title: ENHANCED SYSTEM FOR CONSTRUCTION OF ADENOVIRUS VECTORS

(57) Abstract

In the present invention, viruses, plasmids or both are constructed which contain viral DNA, either at least one head-to-head ITR junction, recombinase recognition sites positioned such that site-specific recombination between recombinase recognition sites in separate plasmids results in generation of infectious viral DNA at high-efficiency in cotransfected host cells that have been engineered to express a site-specific recombinase, or both. Because of the high-efficiency and specificity of the Cre enzyme, the FLP enzyme, or both, suitably engineered plasmids can be readily recombined to produce infectious virus at high-efficiency in cotransfected 293 cells, without, at the same time, producing wild-type adenovirus, with the attendant problems for removal thereof. Use of recombinases besides Cre or FLP, and recombinase recognition sites besides lox or frt sites, and use of cells other than 293 cells are also disclosed and enabled, as are kits incorporating the site-specific vector system, as well as compositions and methods for using such compositions as vaccines or in gene therapeutic applications. Enhancements in the efficiency of both site-specific and homologous recombination are provided by inclusion of at least one head-to-head ITR junction.

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TITLE OF THE INVENTIONENHANCED SYSTEM FOR CONSTRUCTION OF ADENOVIRUS VECTORS5 CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is a continuation-in-part of copending parent application serial no. 09/263,650, filed on March 5, 1999, and of copending parent application serial no. 09/415,899, filed on October 8, 1999.

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FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to methods for efficient and reliable construction of adenovirus vectors that contain and express foreign DNA and are useful for gene transfer 15 into mammalian cells, for vaccines and for gene therapy. The vector system described herein is an improvement and modification of the two plasmid pBHG system, described in copending patent application Serial No.08/250,885, a foreign equivalent of which published as WO95/00655, hereby incorporated by reference, whereby a replication defective genomic adenoviral vector and a shuttle plasmid were recombined via 20 homologous recombination in a cell in which they were cotransfected. This invention further represents an improvement over the 09/263,650 system whereby, through insertion of a head-to-head ITR junction in the shuttle plasmid, enhanced vector rescue efficiency is achieved, whether through homologous or site-specific recombination mechanisms.

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BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

As taught in WO95/00655, adenoviruses (Ads) can be used as mammalian cell expression vectors, with excellent potential as live recombinant viral vaccines, as transducing vectors for gene therapy, for research, and for production of proteins in mammalian cells.

30

In the human Ad genome, early region 1 (E1), E3, and a site upstream of E4 have been utilized as sites for introducing foreign DNA sequences to generate adenovirus recombinants. In the absence of compensating deletions in E1 or E3, a maximum of about 2 kb can be inserted into the Ad genome to generate viable virus progeny. The E1 region
5 is not required for viral replication in complementing 293 cells, or other cells known to complement E1, and up to approximately 3.2 kb can be deleted in this region to generate conditional helper independent vectors with a capacity of 5.0-5.2 kb. In the E3 region, which is not required for viral replication in cultured cells, deletions of various sizes have been utilized to generate nonconditional helper independent vectors with a capacity of up
10 to 4.5-4.7 kb. The combination of deletions in E1 and E3 permits the construction and propagation of adenovirus vectors with a capacity for insertions of up to approximately 8 kb of foreign DNA.

The construction of Adenovirus vectors can be performed in many ways. One approach is
15 to cotransfect permissive cells, usually, but not limited to, 293 cells, with a shuttle plasmid containing a portion of the left end of the Ad genome and, most commonly, having the E1 sequences replaced by a foreign DNA, and with DNA isolated from virions cleaved near the left end by a suitable restriction enzyme. Homologous recombination between overlapping viral DNA sequences of the shuttle plasmid and the virion DNA results in
20 production of recombinant viruses containing the foreign DNA. A disadvantage of this method is the need to prepare purified viral DNA. In addition, such methods typically result in the presence of contaminating parental virus in the resulting vector preparations, such as when 100% of the viral DNA is not cleaved, or when the two viral DNA fragments produced by restriction cleavage are rejoined.

25 Another method has recently been described (Hardy S, Kitamura M, Harris-Stansil T, Dai Y, Phipps ML, "Construction of adenovirus vectors through Cre-lox recombination." J Virol 1997 Mar;71(3):1842-1849; see also PCT publication WO97/32481 relating to use of site-specific recombination of virus and helper dependent vectors) which involves
30 infection of 293Cre cells (293 cells engineered to express Cre recombinase) with an Adenovirus containing a floxed packaging signal (Ψ) and transfection with a shuttle

plasmid containing an ITR, a packaging signal and an expression cassette followed by a lox site, or cotransfection of 293Cre cells with purified deproteinized Adenoviral DNA and a shuttle plasmid. According to that method, Cre-mediated excision of the packaging signal from virus followed by site-specific recombination with the lox site in the shuttle 5 plasmid produces a recombinant vector containing the expression cassette. However, as Cre action is not 100% efficient, the resulting virus preparations remain contaminated with parental virus, and must be passaged in 293Cre cells to eliminate the contaminating parental virus. A further disadvantage of this method is that it requires use of an infectious virus or DNA extracted from a virus as one of the starting materials, and is thus less 10 attractive for commercial distribution than kits containing only bacterial plasmid DNA. Furthermore, the parental virus can recombine with Ad E1 sequences present in 293 cells, resulting in a virus containing a wild-type packaging signal and a wild-type E1 region. Such recombinant virus has the propensity to overgrow the original vector, leading to contamination of subsequent vector preparations with non-attenuated E1 expressing Ads.

15 One of the most frequently used and most popular methods for construction of adenovirus vectors is based on “the two plasmid method” (see Bett, A. J., Haddara, W., Prevec, L. and Graham, F.L An efficient and flexible system for construction of adenovirus vectors with insertions or deletions in early regions 1 and 3. Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. US 91: 8802-8806, 20 1994), whereby suitable host cells (typically 293 cells) are cotransfected with two plasmids that separately are incapable of generating infectious virus, but which, when recombined within the transfected cell by homologous recombination, can generate replicating virus. The most widely used plasmids of this type are described in patent application S/N Serial No.08/250,885, and in PCT publication number WO95/00655, hereby incorporated by 25 reference. That system has advantages over other methods using viruses or viral DNA as components since only easily-prepared plasmid DNAs are needed, and there is no background of parental virus that could contaminate the final vector isolates. Furthermore, the plasmids are not only easy and inexpensive to produce by those skilled in the art, but can be easily stored and transported, making them convenient for commercial distribution, 30 (i.e. particularly when precipitated with ethanol or when lyophilized, these vectors do not require a cold chain for distribution). However, although this currently available system

has proven utility and is widely used, the efficiency of virus production by homologous recombination can be low and variable, and the system cannot always be used easily by those not skilled in the art.

5 As demonstrated in the art (Anton, M. and Graham, F. L. "Site-specific recombination mediated by an adenovirus vector expressing the Cre recombinase protein: a molecular switch for control of gene expression," J. Virol. 69:4600-4606, 1995), and as described also in application serial number 08/486,549 ("Adenoviruses for control of gene expression", hereby incorporated by reference), provision of Cre recombinase in Ad-
10 infected cells can catalyse excision or rearrangement of viral DNA sequences that contain the target sites (*lox P*) for Cre-mediated site-specific recombination.
Such techniques are combined in the present invention with a head-to-head ITR containing shuttle plasmid to provide a long-needed advancement in the art of adenoviral vector production by enhancing the efficiency of vector production, whether through homologous
15 recombination or site-specific recombination events. In addition, the present patent disclosure demonstrates that the FLP recombinase, which recognizes a nucleic acid site known as frt (O'Gorman, S., Fox, D. T. and Wahl, G. M. Recombinase-mediated gene activation and site specific integration in mammalian cell. Science 251: 1351-1355, 1991; Senecoff, J. F., Rossmeissl, P. J. and Cox, M. M., DNA recognition by the FLP
20 recombinase of the yeast 2 μ plasmid, J. Mol. Biol. 201: 405-421, 1988) may be used in similar fashion to Cre recombinase and with similar efficiency for construction of Ad vectors by recombination between two plasmids cotransfected into host cells "two plasmid method". It will be appreciated by those skilled in the art based on this disclosure that the
25 method is not limited to the use of Cre recombinase and its recognition sites and FLP and its recognition sites, as other site specific recombinases that act in similar fashion to Cre and FLP could be substituted for Cre or FLP recombinases, or used in combination with such enzymes. It will also be appreciated that although the examples disclosed herein describe methods to rescue foreign DNA into the E1 region of "first generation" Ad vectors these examples are not meant to be limiting as the target sites for site specific
30 recombination can be readily inserted into other regions of the viral genome and site specific recombination can consequently be utilized for manipulation of other regions of the viral genome besides E1.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

In the present invention, viruses, plasmids or both are constructed which contain head-to-head ITR junctions, and optionally, wherein said viral DNA may also contain *lox P* sites positioned such that site-specific recombination between *lox P* sites in separate plasmids results in generation of infectious viral DNA at high-efficiency in cotransfected host cells that have been engineered to express the Cre recombinase. Such cells (293Cre cells) have been described by Parks, R. J., Chen, L., Anton, M., Sankar, U., Rudnicki, M. A. and Graham, F. L. "A new helper-dependent adenovirus vector system: removal of helper virus by Cre-mediated excision of the viral packaging signal," Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. U.S. 93: 13565-13570, 1996, by Chen, L., Anton, M. and Graham, F. L., "Production and characterization of human 293 cell lines expressing the site-specific recombinase Cre," Somat. Cell and Molec. Genet. 22: 477-488, 1996, in US patent application serial number 08/473,168, and in PCT publication WO96/40955, hereby incorporated by reference for this purpose. Because of the high-efficiency and specificity of the Cre enzyme, suitably engineered plasmids can be readily recombined to produce infectious virus at high-efficiency in cotransfected 293 cells, without, at the same time, producing a contaminating parental adenovirus, with the attendant problems for removal thereof.

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Due to the enhancement of recombination efficiency achieved by the instant invention, whereby a head-to-head ITR junction is included in the shuttle plasmid, even in the absence of site-specific recombination, enhanced efficiency is achieved in production of recombinant virus vectors.

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In one embodiment of this invention a head-to-head ITR junction is included in the shuttle plasmid, whereby enhanced efficiency of production of recombinant virus vectors is achieved whether by homologous recombination or by site-specific recombination.

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In a further embodiment of this invention, homologous recombination via cellular enzymes is replaced by site-specific recombination, via a recombinase such as Cre, FLP or the like, to join two DNAs that separately are noninfectious to form an infectious DNA molecule,

wherein the efficiency of the site-specific recombination is enhanced by inclusion of head-to-head ITR junctions in the shuttle plasmids of a two-plasmid system. One application of the techniques disclosed herein is the isolation of "first generation" vectors with insertions of foreign DNA in E1. Such applications utilize a series of plasmids such as pBHGloxΔE1,3 (see Figure 1, and variations and equivalents thereof), and various shuttle plasmids containing a head-to-head ITR junction, a packaging signal, an expression cassette, and a lox or other recombinase recognition site. Another application is in a sense the mirror image. Using a plasmid such as pFG173lox, sequences are rescued into the right end of the viral DNA, into E3 or into sites rightward of E3. The most important applications of this latter technology will likely be rescue of mutations into the fibre gene located immediately rightward of E3 (Figure 9) (fibre is important because it is a major ligand for binding to cellular receptors) but one can also rescue mutations, deletions, insertions and other modifications in E4 genes (located between fibre and the right ITR) or the method is used to rescue inserts of foreign DNA into E3 (cotransfection of a plasmid such as that depicted in figure 11 with pFG173lox). Note that the plasmid pFG173lox has a deletion of fibre, but E4 sequences could just as well be deleted as well as or instead of fibre. Note also that lox sites could be inserted at other locations in the Ad genome to enable the rescue of mutations engineered in other viral genes besides those of fibre or E4, or rescue of DNA inserts into other sites.

20

In a further embodiment of this invention, DNA-TP complexes are utilized to combine the high efficiency of head-to-head ITR mediated recombination, with or without site-specific recombination, such as Cre-lox recombination, with the high infectivity of DNA-TP. While the rescue of infectious virus via head-to-head ITR mediated homologous recombination, or head-to-head ITR mediated recombination with Cre-mediated recombination is surprisingly efficient compared to homologous recombination alone, and is more than adequate to produce viral vectors and to introduce mutations into the viral genome for most applications, there may be certain applications for which even higher efficiencies are desirable or necessary. It is known by those skilled in the art that the infectivity of adenovirus DNA is up to 100 fold higher if the virion DNA is extracted and purified by methods that leave intact the terminal protein (TP) that is normally linked to the 5' end of each strand of the duplex Ad DNA molecule (Sharp PA, Moore C, Haverty

JL, "The infectivity of adenovirus 5 DNA-protein complex," Virology 1976 Dec;75(2):442-456, Chinnadurai G, Chinnadurai S, Green M, "Enhanced infectivity of adenovirus type 2 DNA and a DNA-protein complex." J Virol 1978 Apr;26(1):195-199). For rescue of cassettes, the two plasmid system is more than sufficiently efficient, especially with the approximately 10-fold enhancement in efficiency demonstrated herein for head-to-head ITR mediated recombination, or the approximately 100-fold enhancement in efficiency demonstrated herein for head-to-head ITR mediated recombination when coupled with Cre-lox mediated recombination (over homologous recombination alone), and consequently would be preferred for most purposes. However, there may be times when even higher efficiencies are required, as when, for example, one wishes to develop a library of fibre mutations (a large number of different viruses - the more the better). Then the chore of preparing DNA-TP might be worthwhile and could be accomplished by those skilled in the art. Thus, an aspect of the present invention includes the combination of the enhanced recombination mediated by head-to-head ITR junctions in shuttle plasmids, with or without Cre-lox recombination, with the high specific infectivity of adenoviral DNA-TP complexes.

In a further embodiment of this invention, combinations of Cre-lox with FLP-frt are made. For example, based on the present disclosure, one skilled in the art could use the FLP-frt system to rescue cassettes comprising molecular switches regulated by Cre-lox or vice versa. One could use the FLP-frt system to rescue a Cre expression cassette whereas it would otherwise be difficult or not feasible to do this using the Cre-lox system for vector rescue. As 293 cells that express Cre are available per this invention, 293 cells that express FLP are available per this invention, and 293 cells that express Cre and FLP are available per this invention, this invention provides many options to those skilled in the art for manipulation of the viral genome by site specific recombination. Thus the availability of an additional site specific recombinase increases the flexibility and expands the number of available options in the design and construction of Ad vectors. Furthermore, those skilled in the art will appreciate that the use of site specific recombination for manipulation of DNA is not limited to manipulation of adenovirus DNA as one skilled in the art will readily appreciate that other genomes can be similarly recombined by cotransfection into host cells expressing a site specific recombinase.

Therefore, it is an object of the present invention to provide a highly efficient, reliable, and simple method for isolation of viral vectors in which rescue of viruses is enhanced by provision of head-to-head ITR junctions whether recombination is based on homologous recombination, or on site-specific recombination catalysed by a site-specific recombinase,
5 such as but not limited to the Cre recombinase.

It is a further object of this invention to use head-to-head ITR constructs, with or without Cre-lox-mediated recombination, FLP-frt mediated recombination, or both, and known two plasmid vector production systems to provide a simple method for introducing mutations
10 or other modifications of viral genes into any desired location in the viral genome.

It is a further object of this invention to provide a simple and useful system by which adenovirus cloning vectors may be developed.

15 It is a further object of this invention to provide a kit for efficient production of adenoviral vectors for vaccine and gene-therapeutic applications which relies on homologous or site-specific recombination, and which does not require a cold-chain for distribution.

20 A further object of this invention is to provide a system whereby the high-efficiency of the head-to-head ITR mediated recombination, with or without Cre-lox mediated recombination, is combined with enhanced infectivity achieved when adenovirus-TP complexes are utilized.

25 Further objects of this invention will become apparent from a review of the complete disclosure and the claims appended hereto.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

30 **Figure 1** is a diagrammatic representation showing a method for isolation of an Ad vector containing an expression cassette in E1 using the Cre/lox recombination system.

pBHGloxΔE1,3 comprises a circularized form of the Ad genome with a deletion of the E1 region including the packaging signal and a bacterial plasmid origin of replication and an ampicillin resistance gene. The plasmid has a loxP site near the 5' end of the pIX gene of the Ad genome and a deletion of E3 sequences. The “shuttle plasmid” contains an ITR of the virus genome and a packaging signal, a polycloning site for insertion of a foreign DNA (eg bacterial β-galactosidase (LacZ)) and a loxP site inserted in the same relative orientation as the loxP site in pBHGloxΔE1,3. Cotransfection of these two plasmids into 293Cre cells that express Cre results in Cre-mediated recombination and formation of joint molecules that generate infectious viruses containing the foreign DNA insert. According to this invention, the ITR of the shuttle plasmid is replaced with a head-to-head ITR junction, thereby enhancing the efficiency of the site-specific recombination method.

Figure 2 illustrates a cotransfection experiment similar to that depicted in Figure 1 except that the shuttle plasmid contains Ad sequences 3' of the lox site that overlap (are homologous) with viral sequences in pBHGloxΔE1,3 to the right of the lox site. Therefore an Ad vector containing an expression cassette in E1 can be generated by Cre/lox recombination when the two plasmids are cotransfected into 293Cre cells or alternatively by homologous recombination between overlapping sequences. The shuttle plasmid in the illustration permits a comparison of the efficiency obtainable from the two recombination modes. According to this invention, the ITR of the shuttle plasmid is replaced with a head-to-head ITR junction, thereby enhancing the efficiency of the site-specific recombination method.

Figure 2a. Construction of shuttle plasmids. The plasmid pCA35lox was constructed by replacing the *Xba*I/*Sal*II fragment containing the LacZ expression cassette under the control of the short MCMV promotor in pCA36lox with the *Xba*I/*Sal*II fragment containing the LacZ expression cassette under the control of the long MCMV promotor from pCA35loxΔCreITR. The plasmid pCA35loxΔITR was constructed by replacing the *Ase*I fragment bearing the single left end ITR in pCA36loxΔ with the *Ase*I fragment bearing an ITR junction from pCA35loxΔCreITR. The plasmid pCA35loxITR was constructed by

replacing the *AseI* fragment bearing the single left end ITR in pCA36lox with the *AseI* fragment bearing an ITR junction from pCA35loxΔCreITR. The plasmid pCA36ITR was constructed by replacing the *Scal/XbaI* fragment bearing the single left end ITR in pCA36 with the *Scal/XbaI* fragment bearing an ITR junction from pCA35loxITR. The plasmid 5 pCA35ITR was generated by replacing the *XbaI/SalI* fragment containing the LacZ expression cassette under the control of the short MCMV promotor in pCA36ITR with the *XbaI/SalI* fragment containing the LacZ expression cassette under the control of the long MCMV promotor from pCA35loxITR. Thin black lines represent bacterial plasmid sequences and thick black lines represent Ad sequences. The position and orientation of 10 *loxP* sites and Ad ITR are indicated by white triangles and small horizontal arrows, respectively. Plasmids are not drawn to scale and only the relevant restriction enzyme sites are shown.

Figure 3 illustrates four sets (pairs) of oligonucleotides used in various cloning procedures. 15 The oligos are annealed prior to use to produce the double stranded DNA segments illustrated. Three of the oligonucleotide pairs contain *loxP*, the recognition site for Cre recombinase as well as one or more restriction endonuclease sites used for diagnostic purposes or for subsequent cloning steps. One of the oligonucleotide pairs contains several restriction endonuclease sites and was used to introduce a polycloning site into various 20 shuttle plasmids.

Figure 4 illustrates the construction of a plasmid, derived from pBHG10 (Bett, A. J., Haddara, W., Prevec, L. and Graham, F.L “An efficient and flexible system for construction of adenovirus vectors with insertions or deletions in early regions 1 and 3.”

Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. US 91: 8802-8806, 1994., available from Microbix Biosystems), wherein a *loxP* site is inserted at the 3' end of an E1 deletion and 5' (upstream) of the pIX gene. pBHGloxΔE1,3 was constructed by replacing the 4604 bp *Bst*1107I fragment from pBHG10 with the 2326 bp *Eco*RV/*Bst*1107I fragment from pΔE1sp1Alox (see Figures 5 and 5a). Foreign DNA sequences can be inserted into the unique *Pac*I site of pBHGloxΔE1,3 for rescue of genes in E3.

Figure 4a illustrates the construction of a plasmid, pBHGdX1Plox, containing a modified E3 deletion (taken from pFG23dX1) and a lox site 5' of the pIX gene. The plasmid pFG23dX1P was constructed by inserting an oligonucleotide containing a *Pac*I site (AB14566; 5'- CTAGCTTAATTAAG -3'; this oligo self anneals to produce a double stranded DNA with 5' overhangs that hybridize to overhangs generated by *Xba*I cleavage) into the *Xba*I site of pFG23dX1. The resulting plasmid, pFG23dX1P, is identical to pFG23dX1 except that the unique *Xba*I site at nt 11392 is changed to a unique *Pac* I site. The plasmid pNG17 was constructed by cloning the 6724 bp *Spe*I/*Cla*I fragment from pBHGloxΔE1,3 into pBluescript. The plasmid pNG17dX1P was constructed by replacing the 1354 bp *Spe*I/*Nde*I fragment from pNG17 with the 2143 bp *Spe*I/*Nde*I fragment from pFG23dX1P. Finally, the plasmid pBHGdX1Plox was constructed by replacing the 6724 bp *Spe*I/*Cla*I fragment from pBHGloxΔE1,3 with the 7513 bp *Spe*I/*Cla*I fragment from pNG17dX1P. pBHGdX1Plox thus contains a modified E3 region such that the deletion of E3 sequences is that of the parental plasmid pFG23dX1 (a deletion of 1878 bp) rather than the larger deletion of the other parental plasmid pBHGloxΔE1,3.

Figure 4b illustrates the construction of pBHGE3lox, a plasmid derived from pBHGE3 and pBHGloxΔE1,3 constructed by replacing the 6724 bp *SpeI/ClaI* fragment from pBHGloxΔE1,3 with the 9377 bp *SpeI/ClaI* fragment from pBHGE3. PBHGE3lox contains a complete E3 region for isolation of viral vectors that retain a wild-type E3.

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Figure 4c illustrates the construction of Ad genomic plasmids encoding Cre. The plasmid pBHGloxpoly1 was constructed by insertion of an oligonucleotide pair containing *Bst*B I, *Xba* I and *Swa* I sites and *Cla* I compatible ends into the *Cla* I site of pBHGloxΔE1,3. The Cre expression cassettes, taken from the pBSKS-Cre1 or pBSKS-Cre2 as a *Sma* I-*Spe* I fragment fragment, were inserted into *Swa* I, *Xba* I digested pBHGloxpoly1as illustrated to generate pBHGloxΔE1,3Cre and pBHGloxΔE1,3CreR.

10 **Figure 5** illustrates the construction of shuttle plasmids derived from pΔE1SP1A and pΔE1SP1B wherein a loxP site is introduced 3' of the packaging signal. The plasmids pΔE1sp1Alox and pΔE1sp1Blox were constructed by inserting an oligonucleotide bearing a *loxP* site (comprised of annealed oligos AB3233 and AB 3234) into the *Bgl*II site of pΔE1sp1A. Subsequent digestion with *Nru* I and partial *Sca* I digestion followed by ligation generated pΔE1SP1AloxΔ and pΔE1SP1BloxΔ.

15 **Figure 5a.** Construction of shuttle plasmids. The plasmids pΔE1SP1Alox and pΔE1SP1Blox were constructed by inserting a loxP linker (AB3233/AB3234) into the *Bgl* II site of pΔE1SP1A and pΔE1SP1B. The plasmids pΔE1SP1AloxITR and pΔE1SP1BloxITR were produced by replacing the *Pvu* I/*Xba* I fragment of pΔE1SP1Alox and pΔE1SP1Blox with a *Pvu*I/*Xba* I fragment from pCA35loxITR. The resulting

plasmids now contain an ITR junction instead of just a single left end ITR. The plasmids p Δ E1SP1AloxITR(MCS) and p Δ E1BloxITR(MCS) were generated by inserting oligonucleotides (AB16853/AB16854) and (AB16855/AB16856) into the unique *Xba* I/*Sal*

I sites of p Δ E1SP1AloxITR and *Xba* I/*BamH* I sites of p Δ E1SP1BloxITR respectively.

5

Figure 5b. Construction of shuttle plasmids. The plamids pDC111 and DC112 were produced by digesting p Δ E1SP1AloxITR(MCS) and p Δ E1SP1BloxITR(MCS) with *Ehe* I followed by a partial digest with *Sca* I followed by ligation. The resulting plasmids now lack essential left end Ad sequences required for rescue of Ad vectors by homologous recombination. These shuttle plasmids will only produce plaques in cotransfection with Ad genomic plasmids if there is recombination between loxP sites. The shuttle plasmid pDC113 was generated by replacing the *Pvu* I/*Sal* I site of pDC111 with a similar fragment from p Δ E1SP1A(del *Bgl* II). The plasmid pDC114 was produced by replacing the *Pvu* I/*BamH* I of pDC112 with a similiar fragment from p Δ E1SP1B(del *Bgl* II). The plasmids, 10 pDC113 and pDC114, are shuttle plasmids which contain an ITR junction and Ad sequences for homologous recombination, but they lack the loxP site found in previous 15 plasmids.

Figure 5c. Synthetic oligonucleotides for use in construction of p Δ E1SP1AloxITR(MCS) and p Δ E1BloxITR(MCS) of Figure 5a.

Figure 5d. Construction of additional shuttle plasmids. The plasmids pDC115 and pDC116 were generated by replacing the *Pvu* I/*Xba* I fragment of pDCMH4lox(Addel) and pDCMH4lox(Addel)linker with a similar *Pvu* I/*Xba* I ITR junction containing fragment

from pCA35loxITR. The resulting plasmids contain an ITR junction instead of a single left end ITR. The plasmids pDC117 and pDC118 were produced by inserting a *Pvu* I/*Sal* I fragment from pCA14(del *Bgl* II) into pDC115 and pDC116 digested with *Pvu* I/*Sal* I. The plasmids pDC117 and pDC118 have no loxP site, but they do contain Ad sequences for 5 virus rescue by homologous recombination.

Figure 6 illustrates the construction of pMH4lox, pMH4loxΔ (also referred to herein as pDCMH4lox(Ad del) and pMH4loxΔlink (also referred to herein as pDCMH4lox(Ad del) Linker), plasmids that contain lox sites and a promoter and polyadenylation signal and 10 polycloning sites for insertion of foreign DNA to produce expression cassettes in which transcription is driven by the murine cytomegalovirus immediate early gene promoter. Plasmid pVDB3 (see Figure 6a) is derived from pMH4 but contains a pUC based origin of replication rather than a pBR322 origin. It contains Ad5 sequences from m.u. 0-15.8 with E1 sequences deleted between m.u. 1 and 9.8 and substituted with an expression 15 cassette: a 0.5kbp (-491 to +36) fragment of the MCMV IE promoter, unique restriction enzyme sites for cloning (*Eco* RI, *Nhe* I, *Bam* HI and *Sal* I) followed by an SV40 polyadenylation signal. To make pMH4lox, a loxP linker (AB3233/3234) was introduced into the *Bgl* II site of pVDB3. Ad5 sequences m.u. 9.8-15.8 were deleted from pMH4lox by digesting with *Hind* III, treating with the Klenow fragment of *E. coli* DNA polymerase 20 then partially digesting with *Sca* I followed by self- ligation. The resulting shuttle plasmid, pMH4loxΔ, (also referred to herein as pDCMH4lox(Ad del)), can be used with pBHGloxΔE1,3 to produce Ad vectors via Cre/lox mediated recombination. To make pMH4loxΔ a more flexible plasmid for cloning purposes, a linker (AB14626/14627)

containing a different multiple cloning region was introduced between the *Eco* RI and *Sal* I sites resulting in pMH4loxΔlink, (also referred to herein as pDCMH4lox(Ad del)Linker).

Figure 6a illustrates the construction of plasmid pVDB3 derived from pMH4 but containing a pUC based origin of replication rather than a pBR322 origin. A *Pvu*I to *Bst* 11071 fragment from pMH4 (Microbix Biosystems) was ligated to a *Bst* 11071 to *Pvu* I fragment from pD47E1 containing a pUC based (pNEB193, New England Biolabs) origin of plasmid DNA replication to generate pVDB3.

Figure 7 illustrates construction of HCMV loxP plasmids, pCA13loxΔ and pCA14loxΔ, in which transcription of foreign genes is regulated by the human cytomegalovirus immediate early gene promoter. The plasmids pCA13(Δ*Bg*III) and pCA14(Δ*Bg*III) were generated by digesting pCA13 and pCA14 partially with *Bg*III, Klenowing and self-ligating. A synthetic loxP oligonucleotide (AB3233/3234) was introduced into the unique *Bg*III sites of pCA13(Δ*Bg*III) and pCA14(Δ*Bg*III) producing pCA13lox and pCA14lox respectively. Ad5 sequences, m.u. 9.8-15.8, were removed from pCA13lox and pCA14lox by cutting each plasmid with *Nru*I and partially digesting each with *Sca*I followed by self ligation.

Figure 8 is a diagrammatic representation of a method for constructing pCA36loxΔ a shuttle plasmid containing the leftmost approximately 340 nt of Ad5, an expression cassette encoding β-galactosidase, and a *lox P* site for rescue of the LacZ gene into adenovirus vectors. A synthetic loxP site (AB3233/3234) was introduced into the *Bgl* II site of pCA36 resulting in pCA36lox. This plasmid was then digested with *Nru* I and

partially digested with *Sca* I, a 7646bp fragment was gel purified and self ligated yielding pCA36loxΔ.

Figure 8a is a diagrammatic representation of a means to isolate adenoviral vectors containing an expression cassette by cotransfection of 293Cre cells with (a) AdLC8c DNA-TP complex having covalently bound terminal protein (TP) linked to the 5' ends of Adenoviral DNA and (b) a shuttle plasmid containing an expression cassette and a *lox* P site. Cre-mediated excision of the floxed packaging signal of AdLC8c renders the AdLC8c genome defective for packaging. A second Cre-mediated recombination event between the lox sites in the shuttle plasmid and the AdLC8c genome results in a vector with a packaging signal, the foreign DNA insert, and a single lox site. According to this invention, the ITR of the shuttle plasmid is replaced with a head-to-head ITR junction, thereby enhancing the efficiency of the site-specific recombination method.

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Figure 8b is a diagrammatic representation of a means to isolate adenoviral vectors containing an expression cassette by cotransfection of 293Cre cells with restricted AdLC8c DNA-TP and a shuttle plasmid containing an expression cassette and a *lox* P site. AdLC8c DNA-TP is cleaved with an endonuclease such as Asu II or Swa I that recognize unique restriction enzyme sites between the lox sites flanking ψ. Cleavage of viral DNA with restriction enzymes prior to cotransfection reduces the infectivity of parental virus DNA and when combined with the high-efficiency of Cre-mediated recombination results in high-efficiency of vector isolation in cotransfected 293Cre cells as illustrated. Rejoining of parental DNA fragments and generation of infectious parental virus rather

than the desired vector is avoided because of the action of Cre on the floxed packaging signal in AdLC8c. However, when the viral DNA-TP complex is cut with a restriction enzyme as illustrated, the level of Cre-mediated recombination is sufficiently high that most, if not all, progeny viruses result from recombination between the shuttle plasmid and the large DNA-TP fragment. Therefore, the left-most lox site of AdLC8c and equivalent vectors is not essential. According to this invention, the ITR of the shuttle plasmid can be replaced with a head-to-head ITR junction, thereby enhancing the efficiency of the site-specific recombination method.

Figure 8c is a diagrammatic representation of a method for constructing shuttle plasmids expressing Cre. The Cre expression cassette was obtained from the plasmid pLC2 (Chen, L., Anton, M. and Graham, F.L., "Production and characterization of human 293 cell lines expressing the site-specific recombinase Cre," *Somat. Cell and Molec. Genet.* 22:477-488, 1996), as a 2175 bp *Bgl*II fragment which was end-modified with Klenow DNA polymerase and inserted into the *Ehe*I site of pCA36 Δ lox to generate pCA36 Δ loxΔCreR and pCA36 Δ loxΔCreT. The plasmid pCA35 Δ loxΔCreITR was constructed by replacing the 1402 bp *Scal*I/*Kpn*I fragment in pCA36 Δ loxΔCreT with the 2753 bp *Scal*I/*Kpn*I fragment from the plasmid pRP1029. Plasmid pCA35 Δ loxΔCreITR contains ITR junctions which are known to be functionally capable of generating replicating linear Ad DNA molecules (Graham, F.L., "Covalently closed circles of human adenovirus DNA are infections," *The EMBO J.* 3, 2917-2922, 1984).

Figure 8d provides a schematic representation of a cotransfection experiment wherein an Ad genomic plasmid bearing a lox site such as pBHGloxΔE1,3 and a "Lox" shuttle

plasmid expressing Cre are introduced into 293 cells in order to generate Ad expression vectors, without having to use cells which stably express Cre. This technique is applicable to any cell type suitable for Ad vector generation, including but not limited to 293 cells, and PER-C6 cells (Fallaux et al., Hum. Gene Ther. 1998, Sep. 1;9(13):1909-17), 911 cells (Fallaux et al., Hum. Gene Ther. 1996 Jan. 20;7(2):215-222), or other cells.

According to this invention, the ITR of the shuttle plasmid is optionally replaced with a head-to-head ITR junction, thereby enhancing the efficiency of the site-specific recombination method. Thus a shuttle plasmid such as pCA35loxΔCreITR of figure 8c is also suitable for generation of an adenovirus vector.

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Figure 8e. Demonstrates the construction of an Ad genomic plasmid encoding Cre. The plasmid pBHGloxΔ was constructed by collapsing pBHGloxΔE1,3 with *SpeI* and *PshAI*. The Cre expression cassette, taken from the plasmid pLC2 as a 2175 bp *Bg*III fragment, was inserted into the *Bam*HI site of pBHGloxΔ to generate pBHGloxΔCreR and pBHGloxΔCreL. The 1238 bp *Bst*1107I/*Pac*I fragment from pBHGloxΔCreR and pBHGloxΔCreL was replaced with the 22380 bp *Bst*1107I/*Pac*I fragment from pBHGloxΔE1,3 to generate pBHGloxCreR and pBHGloxCreL, respectively.

Figure 9 is a diagrammatic representation of a method for rescuing fibre mutations into infectious virus using Cre-lox recombination. Plasmid pFG173lox is derived from pFG173 which is a bacterial plasmid containing most of the Ad5 genome but from which sequences have been deleted (represented by “deletion” in the diagram) that render the plasmid noninfectious. The sequences are substituted with bacterial DNA containing an antibiotic resistance gene and a bacterial plasmid origin of DNA replication. A lox site upstream

(leftward in the conventional map of the Ad genome) of the deletion/substitution is inserted in the plasmid for Cre-mediated recombination with a similar lox site in a shuttle plasmid containing the right region of the viral genome from approximately 85 mu to approximately 100 mu and including most or all of the right ITR. Recombination as illustrated generates an infectious virus containing sequences representing the left approximately 78 mu of the Ad genome derived from pFG173lox and sequences from approximately 85- 100 mu derived from the shuttle plasmid. According to this invention, the ITR of the shuttle plasmid is optionally replaced with a head-to-head ITR junction, thereby enhancing the efficiency of the site-specific recombination method.

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Figure 9a is a diagrammatic representation of a method for constructing a plasmid containing a lox site and ampicillin resistance gene substituting for the fibre gene. Starting with pAB14lox whose construction is described in Figure 14, the DNA sequences between the Cla I site and the Blp I site containing fibre are substituted with a DNA segment containing the ampicillin resistance gene and a plasmid origin of DNA replication. The NdeI to Ssp I DNA fragment from pCA14 (Microbix Biosystems) containing ampicillin resistance gene and plasmid origin of DNA replication is treated with Klenow DNA polymerase and ligated with a similarly treated Blp I to ClaI fragment of pAB14lox to generate the ampicillin and kanamycin doubly resistant, fibre gene deleted, pAB14lox Δ .

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Figure 9b is a diagrammatic representation of a method for combining the plasmid of Fig. 9a with pFG173 to produce pFG173lox for rescuing fibre or E4 mutations into infectious virus using Cre-lox recombination. The plasmid pAB14lox Δ is treated with restriction enzymes that cut in and around the kanamycin resistance gene and pFG173 is similarly

digested with Eco RI as illustrated. Transformation of *E. coli* with the fragmented DNA from the two plasmids results in formation of a replicating plasmid in which the sequences in and around the shaded portion indicated in pFG173 are substituted with corresponding sequences from pAB14lox Δ by homologous recombination (Chartier C, Degryse E,
5 Gantzer M, Dieterle A, Pavirani A, Mehtali M. Efficient generation of recombinant adenovirus vectors by homologous recombination in *Escherichia coli*. *J Virol* 1996 Jul;70(7):4805-4810).

Figure 10 is a diagrammatic representation of method for constructing a plasmid
10 containing the right approximately 40% of the virus genome wherein a lox P site has been inserted near the 5' end of the fibre gene. The plasmid pFG23dX1 contains the right 40% of the Ad5 genome cloned into the bacterial plasmid pBR322, and has a deletion of an XbaI fragment from nt 28,589 (79.6 mu) of the wt Ad5 sequence to nt 30470 (mu 84.8) leaving a unique XbaI site suitable for insertion of a loxP site. A loxP site comprised of
15 two synthetic oligonucleotides (AB6920/AB6921, Figure 3) was ligated into the XbaI site of pFG23dX1 to generate pFG23dX1lox which contains a loxP site upstream of the sequences encoding fibre. Finally, pFG23dX1lox was further modified by deletion of viral sequences between a unique Bst11071 site and a BsiW1 site immediately 5' of the lox P site to generate pFG23dX1loxc.

Figure 11 illustrates a pFG23dX1lox plasmid with an expression cassette encoding bacterial β -galactosidase inserted into the Cla I site between the lox P site and the fibre gene.

Figure 11a is a diagrammatic representation of a method for combining two noninfectious plasmids by site specific recombination between lox sites inserted 5' of the Ad E3 region in each plasmid to generate a replicating packageable recombinant viral genome. Both plasmids comprise ITR junctions that allow for DNA replication in transfected host cells that express viral functions required in trans for Ad DNA replication. The combined plasmid DNAs encode all viral functions required in trans and in cis for viral DNA replication and packaging into virions. In the illustrated example, not meant to be limiting, the method is used for rescuing fibre mutations into infectious virus using Cre-lox recombination. Plasmid pFG173lox is derived from pFG173 which is a bacterial plasmid containing most of the Ad5 genome but from which sequences have been deleted (represented by “deletion” in the diagram) that render the plasmid noninfectious. The sequences are substituted with bacterial DNA containing an antibiotic resistance gene and a bacterial plasmid origin of DNA replication. Said sequences could be additionally substituted with an expression cassette encoding Cre recombinase. A lox site upstream (leftward in the conventional map of the Ad genome) of the deletion/substitution is inserted in the plasmid for Cre-mediated recombination with a similar lox site in a shuttle plasmid containing the right region of the viral genome from approximately 85 mu to approximately 100 mu and including the right ITR joined “head to head” with the right ITR. Linearization of the two plasmids DNAs and site specific recombination between the lox sites will generate an infectious virus containing sequences representing the left approximately 78 mu of the Ad genome derived from pFG173lox and sequences from approximately 85- 100 mu derived from the shuttle plasmid.

Figure 12 is a diagrammatic representation showing rescue of a fibre mutation into a virus genome by cotransfection of 293Cre cells with DNA-TP of an Adfloxed fibre and a plasmid containing a *lox P* site 5' of a (optionally mutated) fibre gene. Viral DNA-TP complex extracted from virus preparations of Adflox fibre (Figure 15) and plasmid DNA (pFGdX1lox) optionally carrying a mutated fibre gene are cotransfected into 293Cre cells to produce a recombinant virus expressing the optionally mutated fibre. If desired, viral DNA can be prepared so that the terminal protein remains linked to the ends of the virion DNA as indicated. As will be seen from the present disclosure, a shuttle plasmid with a head to head ITR junction will provide for enhanced efficiency of virus rescue.

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Figure 13 is a diagrammatic representation showing rescue of a foreign DNA sequence into a virus genome by cotransfection of 293Cre cells with DNA-TP of an Adfloxed fibre and a plasmid containing a *lox P* site, and a foreign DNA inserted 5' of the fibre gene. Cotransfection of cells with Adflox fibre DNA-TP and pFG23dX1LacZlox results in production of a vector carrying the foreign (e.g. lacZ) gene inserted upstream of fibre. As noted above in the description of figure 8B, the right-most lox site depicted in the Adfloxed fibre genome can be omitted if the DNA-TP is digested with one or more restriction enzymes which cut rightward of the lox site located 5' of fibre.

As will be seen from the present disclosure, a shuttle plasmid with a head to head ITR junction will provide for enhanced efficiency of virus rescue.

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Figure 14 is a diagrammatic representation showing construction of a plasmid containing a fibre gene with flanking *lox P* sites. Plasmid pAB14 (described in: Bett, A. J., Prevec, L., and Graham, F. L. Packaging capacity and stability of human adenovirus type 5 vectors. J. Virol. 67: 5911- 5921, 1993.) contains Ad sequences from approximately mu 0 to 1.0, 10.6 to 16.1, 69.0 to 78.3, and 85.8 to 100. The plasmid has unique XbaI and BlnI

restriction sites suitable for insertion of synthetic oligonucleotides containing lox P sites as illustrated. PAB14flox was constructed by first inserting a lox site into the XbaI site that is upstream of fibre to produce pAB14lox. Subsequently a second lox site was inserted into the unique Blp I site in pAB14 which is located between the 3' terminus of the fibre gene and the coding regions of E4 genes (pAB14flox: fibre flanked by lox sites).

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Figure 15 is a diagrammatic representation showing isolation of a virus genome containing *lox P* sites flanking the fibre gene (floxed fibre). Cotransfection of pAB14flox with pFG173 (described in Hanke, T., Graham, F.L., V. Lulitanond and D.C. Johnson. Herpes simplex virus IgG Fc receptors induced using recombinant adenovirus vectors expressing glycoproteins E and I. *Virology* 177: 437-444, 1990. PFG173 is available from Microbix Biosystems) generates a virus containing a floxed fibre gene, Adfloxfibre.

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Figure 16A illustrates the essential features of the FLP recombinase and its target site “frt”. The core recognition site of the enzyme is only approximately 34 bp in size and is thus readily synthesized in the form of synthetic oligonucleotides for insertion into restriction sites by standard recombinant DNA techniques.

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Figure 16B illustrates the construction of a plasmid, derived from pBHG10 (Bett, A. J., Haddara, W., Prevec, L. and Graham, F.L. “An efficient and flexible system for construction of adenovirus vectors with insertions or deletions in early regions 1 and 3.” Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. US 91: 8802-8806, 1994., available from Microbix Biosystems), wherein a frt site is inserted at the 3' end of an E1 deletion and 5' (upstream) of the pIX gene. pBHGfrtΔE1,3 was constructed by replacing the 4604 bp *Bst*1107I fragment from

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pBHG10 with the 2316 bp *EcoRV/Bst*1107I fragment from p Δ E1sp1Af rt . p Δ E1sp1Af rt was constructed by inserting a synthetic DNA comprising oligonucleotides AB10352 and AB10353 containing an frt site into the unique *Bgl* II site of p Δ E1sp1A (Bett, A. J., Haddara, W., Prevec, L. and Graham, F.L “An efficient and flexible system for construction of adenovirus vectors with insertions or deletions in early regions 1 and 3.” Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. US 91: 8802-8806, 1994., available from Microbix Biosystems). Foreign DNA sequences can be inserted into the unique *PacI* site of pBHGfrt Δ E1,3 for rescue of genes in E3.

10 **Figure 16C** provides the sequences of oligonucleotides used in various cloning procedures. The oligos are annealed prior to use to produce the double stranded DNA segments for insertion into restriction enzyme digested plasmid DNAs as indicated. Three of the oligonucleotide pairs (AB10352 & AB10353; AB19509 & AB19510; AB19816 & AB19817) contain frt, the recognition site for FLP recombinase as well as one or more 15 restriction endonuclease sites used for diagnostic purposes or for subsequent cloning steps.

20 **Figure 17A.** Construction of a shuttle plasmid containing a LacZ expression cassette and frt site for rescue into an Ad vector by FLP-frt recombination. The plasmid pCA35ITR is described in copending application AdVec 10IA, USSN 09/415,899. It contains the left end of the Ad5 genome with the E1 region substituted with a LacZ expression cassette under the control of the short MCMV promotor. An frt site was introduced into this plasmid by replacing the *Bgl*II/*Ehe*I fragment containing Ad sequences rightward of E1 with a synthetic oligonucleotide containing an frt site. With the removal of all Ad sequences save the ITRs and packaging signal this plasmid can only rescue the LacZ

cassette into a recombinant Ad vector by FLP mediated recombination with a genomic plasmid containing a frt site since sequences for overlap homologous recombination are deleted.

5 **Figure 17B** is a diagrammatic representation showing a method for isolation of an Ad vector containing an expression cassette in E1 using the FLP/frt recombination system. pBHGfrtΔE1,3 comprises a circularized form of the Ad genome with a deletion of the E1 region including the packaging signal and a bacterial plasmid origin of replication and an ampicillin resistance gene. The plasmid has a frt site near the 5' end of the pIX gene of
10 the Ad genome and a deletion of E3 sequences. The “shuttle plasmid”, pCA35frtΔITR (Figure 17A) contains an ITR junction of the virus genome and a packaging signal, a foreign DNA (in this example bacterial β-galactosidase (LacZ)) and a frt site inserted in the same relative orientation as the frt site in pBHGfrtΔE1,3 (Figure 16B). Cotransfection of these two plasmids into 293FLP cells that express FLP results in FLP-mediated
15 recombination and formation of joint molecules that generate infectious viruses containing the foreign DNA insert.

Figure 18 illustrates the construction of an Ad genomic plasmid encoding FLP. The plasmid pBHGfrtΔE1,3poly2 was constructed by insertion of an oligonucleotide pair
20 containing *Bst*B I, *Xba* I and *Swa* I sites and *Cla* I compatible ends into the *Cla* I site of pBHGfrtΔE1,3. The FLP expression cassette, taken from pdeI1CMVFLP as a *Hpa* I-*Sal* I fragment, was inserted into *Swa* I digested pBHGfrtΔE1,3poly2 as illustrated to generate pBHGfrtΔE1,3FLP.

Figure 19A illustrates the construction of shuttle plasmids pDC511 and pDC512 wherein a frt site is introduced 3' of the packaging signal and all Ad sequences are deleted save for the ITR junctions and packaging signal. The plasmids pDC511 and pDC512 are designed for insertion of expression cassettes into any of several cloning sites located between the 5 packaging signal and the frt site.

Figure 19B. illustrates the construction of shuttle plasmid pDC515 from pDC512 and pMH4 by insertion of the Xba I- Bgl II fragment from pMH4 (Addison, C. L., Hitt, M., Kunskens, D. and Graham, F. L. Comparison of the human versus murine 10 cytomegalovirus immediate early gene promoters for transgene expression in adenoviral vectors. J. Gen. Virol. 78: 1653-1661, 1997.) that contains the MCMV promoter and SV40 polyadenylation signal into the XbaI - BamHI site in the polycloning region of pDC512.

Figure 19C. illustrates the construction of shuttle plasmid pDC516 from pDC512, 15 pDC316 and pMH4. The plasmid pDC316 was disclosed previously (see Figure 5d wherein this plasmid was designated as pDC116). PDC516 was generated by combining the XbaI-SalI fragment from pDC316 containing the MCMV promoter and a polycloning region with the SalI - BglII fragment from pMH4 containing the SV40 polyadenylation signal and inserting these into the XbaI-BamHI site of pDC512.

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DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

One embodiment of the present invention provides a bacterial plasmid comprising an antibiotic resistance gene and origin of replication for replication of said plasmid in host

cells and further comprising a circularized modified human adenovirus genome that optionally contains sequences that can be recognized and acted upon by the site-specific recombinase such as Cre, FLP or like recombinases. Said bacterial plasmid is designed to be unable to generate infectious adenovirus by virtue of a deletion of viral DNA sequences, such as the packaging signal, which is normally located at the left end of wild-type Ad DNA, and which is essential for virus replication. Alternatively, formation of infectious virus may be prevented by the insertion of DNA (“stuffer DNA”) such that the overall size of the resulting virus DNA exceeds the upper packaging limit for Ad virions (approximately 38 kb). Deletion of the pIX sequences from the Ad sequences makes the size-limitation of the packaging limitation more stringent, unless complementing cells which express the pIX gene product are used. Optionally, certain additional viral DNA sequences may be deleted, such as sequences from E3, which can in any event be omitted from the viral genome without preventing a viral genome from replicating in such cells as may be permissive for replication of said viral genome in the form of infectious virus.

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Another embodiment of the invention provides a second bacterial plasmid, known as a “shuttle” plasmid, comprising minimally approximately 340 base pairs from the left end of the Ad5 genome, a head-to-head terminal repeat sequence (referred to in abbreviated form herein as “hthITR”), and the packaging signal sequences thereof, optionally a promoter, optionally a foreign DNA encoding a protein, optionally a polyadenylation signal, and optionally a *lox* site (various *lox* sites are known in the art, including, but not limited to *loxP*, *lox511*, *lox514*, *loxPsym*, and mention of any one of these sites incorporates the mention of the other *lox* sites), or like site-specific recombinase recognition sites, such as FRT, recognized by the FLP recombinase. The promoter, foreign

gene and poly adenylation signal are referred to herein collectively as an “expression cassette”. Cotransfected 293Cre cells with said shuttle plasmid and the plasmid of the first embodiment of the invention results in recombination between said plasmids and rescue of said expression cassette into an infectious viral vector by homologous recombination or by action of said Cre recombinase. The hthITR present in the shuttle plasmid has, surprisingly, been found to significantly enhance the level of recombination and rescue of recombinant virus, whether through homologous recombination or through site-specific, recombinase directed recombination, or both.

10 It will be appreciated that the term “bacterial plasmid” is not meant to be limiting, since one skilled in the art would recognize that other types of DNA could be recombined with equal efficiency, by homologous or site-specific recombination, such as through use of the Cre recombinase. For example, the Cre recombinase could be expressed in yeast cells to allow for high-efficiency recombination between yeast artificial chromosomes (YAC’s) 15 harboring an Ad genome, or, similarly, in bacteria, to allow for Cre-mediated recombination between cosmids or bacteriophage genomes harboring Ad sequences. Similarly, expression of Cre in mammalian cells could be used to allow for efficient recombination between two or more infectious Ad vectors, between an Ad vector and a bacterial plasmid, between an adenoviral genome and a linear DNA fragment and the like.

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A third embodiment of the invention provides a mammalian cell line, such as a human cell line, that provides the Cre recombinase enzyme. Alternatively, Cre may be provided by an Ad5 derived vector that expresses the Cre protein in suitable cells or Cre may be provided by a third plasmid encoding Cre or optionally Cre could be expressed from an expression

cassette inserted into one of the two plasmids including a shuttle plasmid comprising said hthITR for use in the two plasmid rescue system. Alternatively, Cre could be expressed in other species, for example bacteria or yeast, to allow for recombination and generation of recombinant Ad genomes in said species. Alternatively, Cre could be provided as a
5 pure or crude protein extract from expression in a variety of species for recombination of said bacterial plasmids *in vitro*. One skilled in the art would recognize that other recombinase systems are available which could catalyse similar recombination events in place of Cre, for example, not meant to be limiting, the yeast FLP recombinase recognizes and recombines FRT target sites and is therefore expected to provide functions similar to
10 those described herein with reference to Cre and its loxP target sites.

A fourth embodiment of the invention provides an adenovirus or a plasmid containing adenovirus DNA wherein a segment of the viral DNA such as, but not limited to, the region encoding fibre is flanked by *lox P* sites.

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A fifth embodiment of the invention provides an adenovirus or a plasmid containing adenovirus DNA wherein a segment of the viral DNA such as, but not limited to, the region encoding fibre is deleted and substituted by a *lox P* site.

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A sixth embodiment of the invention provides a plasmid containing a portion of the viral genome including a segment of viral DNA comprising, for example, fibre coding sequences wherein a single *lox P* site is embedded upstream of fibre coding sequences such that Cre-mediated recombination between said plasmid DNA and the plasmid of the fifth embodiment results in production of an infectious viral genome. Optionally the fibre

gene in said plasmid may be modified by mutation, insertion or deletion of portions of the fibre coding sequences. Similar plasmids can be constructed that have lox P sites at other locations, depending on the viral DNA segment that is to be manipulated by site-specific recombination. For example, a site exists in the Ad genome between the coding sequences of fibre and the coding sequences of E4 that is suitable for insertion of DNA. In this embodiment of the invention, the efficiency of recombination is enhanced several fold by inclusion of an hthITR junction in both of the recombining plasmids.

In a seventh embodiment of the invention, plasmids containing adenovirus sequences and lox sites are recombined in the presence of Cre recombinase to generate novel adenovirus mutants containing modifications of the fibre gene or modifications of other viral genes. In this embodiment of the invention, the efficiency of recombination is enhanced through inclusion of a hthITR junction in both of the recombining plasmids.

- 15 In a preferred embodiment of the present invention, a system is described for the construction of novel Ad vectors, or alteration of existing Ad vectors, by the use of a site-specific recombinase wherein hthITR junctions are included to enhance the efficiency of Ad vector production.
- 20 In a further embodiment of the invention, an infectious viral DNA-TP complex is engineered to take advantage of recombinase-mediated site-specific recombination and the enhanced level of infectivity achieved through presence of the terminal protein.

It will be appreciated by those skilled in the art that the present invention disclosure provides significant advances over techniques known in the art for generation of adenoviral vectors. First, the efficiency by which recombinants are produced is enhanced through use of an hthITR junction in combination with homologous recombination or in combination with site-specific recombination, rather than relying exclusively on homologous recombination. This invention further advances the art in that it facilitates use of vectors which are themselves non-infectious and stable. Further, by use of the methods disclosed herein, rapid production of recombinant virus is facilitated wherein every virus produced is a recombinant virus, as opposed to known methods wherein a starting virus is used in a site-specific recombination wherein substantial levels of non-recombinant starting virus remain in the preparation which has to then be serially passaged to remove the contaminating starter virus. As a result of this enhanced efficiency, while it may in many instances be desirable to colony or plaque-purify the results of a given cotransfection, because all viruses produced according to this embodiment of the instant technique are recombinants, plaque purification is not absolutely required. Accordingly, the instant method provides the option of rapid production of recombinants and screening of products, in a “shot-gun” approach, which will provide significant labor and time savings to those skilled in the art.

In reviewing the detailed disclosure which follows, it should be borne in mind that any publications referenced herein are hereby incorporated by reference in this application in order to more fully describe the state of the art to which the present invention pertains.

It is important to an understanding of the present invention to note that all technical and scientific terms used herein, unless otherwise defined, are intended to have the same meaning as commonly understood by one of ordinary skill in the art. The techniques employed herein are also those that are known to one of ordinary skill in the art, unless stated otherwise.

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Reference to particular buffers, media, reagents, cells, culture conditions and the like, or to some subclass of same, is not intended to be limiting, but should be read to include all such related materials that one of ordinary skill in the art would recognize as being of interest or value in the particular context in which that discussion is presented. For example, it is often possible to substitute one buffer system or culture medium for another, such that a different but known way is used to achieve the same goals as those to which the use of a suggested method, material or composition is directed.

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The terms used herein are not intended to be limiting of the invention. For example, the term "gene" includes cDNAs, RNA, or other polynucleotides that encode gene products. "Foreign gene" denotes a gene that has been obtained from an organism or cell type other than the organism or cell type in which it is expressed; it also refers to a gene from the same organism that has been translocated from its normal situs in the genome. In using the terms "nucleic acid", "RNA", "DNA", etc., we do not mean to limit the chemical structures that can be used in particular steps. For example, it is well known to those skilled in the art that RNA can generally be substituted for DNA, and as such, the use of the term "DNA" should be read to include this substitution. In addition, it is known that a variety of nucleic acid analogues and derivatives is also within the scope of the present

invention. “Expression” of a gene or nucleic acid encompasses not only cellular gene expression, but also the transcription and translation of nucleic acid(s) in cloning systems and in any other context. The term “recombinase” encompasses enzymes that induce, mediate or facilitate recombination, and other nucleic acid modifying enzymes that cause, 5 mediate or facilitate the rearrangement of a nucleic acid sequence, or the excision or insertion of a first nucleic acid sequence from or into a second nucleic acid sequence. The “target site” of a recombinase is the nucleic acid sequence or region that is recognized (e.g., specifically binds to) and/or acted upon (excised, cut or induced to recombine) by the recombinase. The term “gene product” refers primarily to proteins and polypeptides 10 encoded by other nucleic acids (e.g., non-coding and regulatory RNAs such as tRNA, sRNPs). The term “regulation of expression” refers to events or molecules that increase or decrease the synthesis, degradation, availability or activity of a given gene product.

The present invention is also not limited to the use of the cell types and cell lines used 15 herein. Cells from different tissues (breast epithelium, colon, lymphocytes, etc.) or different species (human, mouse, etc.) are also useful in the present invention.

It is important in this invention to detect the generation and expression of recombinant nucleic acids and their encoded gene products. The detection methods used herein include, 20 for example, cloning and sequencing, ligation of oligonucleotides, use of the polymerase chain reaction and variations thereof (e.g., a PCR that uses 7-deaza GTP), use of single nucleotide primer-guided extension assays, hybridization techniques using target-specific oligonucleotides that can be shown to preferentially bind to complementary sequences under given stringency conditions, and sandwich hybridization methods.

Sequencing may be carried out with commercially available automated sequencers utilizing labeled primers or terminators, or using sequencing gel-based methods. Sequence analysis is also carried out by methods based on ligation of oligonucleotide sequences which anneal immediately adjacent to each other on a target DNA or RNA molecule (Wu 5 and Wallace, Genomics 4: 560-569 (1989); Landren et al., Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. 87: 8923-8927 (1990); Barany, F., Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. 88: 189-193 (1991)). Ligase-mediated covalent attachment occurs only when the oligonucleotides are correctly base-paired. The Ligase Chain Reaction (LCR), which utilizes the thermostable Taq ligase for target amplification, is particularly useful for interrogating late onset diabetes mutation loci. The 10 elevated reaction temperatures permits the ligation reaction to be conducted with high stringency (Barany, F., PCR Methods and Applications 1: 5-16 (1991)).

The hybridization reactions may be carried out in a filter-based format, in which the target nucleic acids are immobilized on nitrocellulose or nylon membranes and probed with 15 oligonucleotide probes. Any of the known hybridization formats may be used, including Southern blots, slot blots, "reverse" dot blots, solution hybridization, solid support based sandwich hybridization, bead-based, silicon chip-based and microtiter well-based hybridization formats.

20 The detection oligonucleotide probes range in size between 10-1,000 bases. In order to obtain the required target discrimination using the detection oligonucleotide probes, the hybridization reactions are generally run between 20°-60°C, and most preferably between 30°-50° C. As known to those skilled in the art, optimal discrimination between perfect

and mismatched duplexes is obtained by manipulating the temperature and/or salt concentrations or inclusion of formamide in the stringency washes.

The cloning and expression vectors described herein are introduced into cells or tissues by
5 any one of a variety of known methods within the art. Such methods are described for example in Sambrook et al., Molecular Cloning: A Laboratory Manual, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, New York (1992), which is hereby incorporated by reference. See, also, Ausubel et al., Current Protocols in Molecular Biology, John Wiley and Sons, Baltimore, MD (1989); Hitt et al, "Construction and propagation of human adenovirus
10 vectors," in Cell Biology: A Laboratory Handbook, Ed. J.E. Celis., Academic Press. 2nd Edition, Volume 1, pp: 500-512, 1998; Hitt et al, "Techniques for human adenovirus vector construction and characterization," in Methods in Molecular Genetics, Ed. K.W. Adolph, Academic Press, Orlando, Florida, Volume 7B, pp:12-30, 1995; Hitt, et al., "Construction and propagation of human adenovirus vectors," in Cell Biology: A
15 Laboratory Handbook," Ed. J. E. Celis. Academic Press. pp:479-490, 1994, also hereby incorporated by reference. The methods include, for example, stable or transient transfection, lipofection, electroporation and infection with recombinant viral vectors.

The protein products of recombined and unrecombined coding sequences may be analyzed
20 using immune techniques. For example, a protein, or a fragment thereof is injected into a host animal along with an adjuvant so as to generate an immune response. Immunoglobulins which bind the recombinant fragment are harvested as an antiserum, and are optionally further purified by affinity chromatography or other means. Additionally, spleen cells may be harvested from an immunized mouse host and fused to myeloma cells

to produce a bank of antibody-secreting hybridoma cells. The bank of hybridomas is screened for clones that secrete immunoglobulins which bind to the variant polypeptides but poorly or not at all to wild-type polypeptides are selected, either by pre-absorption with wild-type proteins or by screening of hybridoma cell lines for specific idiotypes that bind
5 the variant, but not wild-type, polypeptides.

Nucleic acid sequences capable of ultimately expressing the desired variant polypeptides are formed from a variety of different polynucleotides (genomic or cDNA, RNA, synthetic oligonucleotides, etc.) as well as by a variety of different techniques.

10

The DNA sequences are expressed in hosts after the sequences have been operably linked to (i.e., positioned to ensure the functioning of) an expression control sequence. These expression vectors are typically replicable in the host organisms either as episomes or as an integral part of the host chromosomal DNA. Commonly, expression vectors contain
15 selection markers (e.g., markers based on tetracycline resistance or hygromycin resistance) to permit detection and/or selection of those cells transformed with the desired DNA sequences. Further details can be found in U.S. Patent No. 4,704,362.

Polynucleotides encoding a variant polypeptide include sequences that facilitate
20 transcription (expression sequences) and translation of the coding sequences such that the encoded polypeptide product is produced. Construction of such polynucleotides is well known in the art. For example, such polynucleotides include a promoter, a transcription termination site (polyadenylation site in eukaryotic expression hosts), a ribosome binding

site, and, optionally, an enhancer for use in eukaryotic expression hosts, and optionally, sequences necessary for replication of a vector.

5 *E. Coli* is one prokaryotic host useful particularly for cloning DNA sequences of the present invention. Other microbial hosts suitable for use include bacilli, such as *Bacillus subtilis*, and other enterobacteriaceae, such as *Salmonella*, *Serratia*, and various *Pseudomonas* species. Expression vectors are made in these prokaryotic hosts which will typically contain expression control sequences compatible with the host cell (e.g., an origin of replication). In addition, any number of a variety of well-known promoters are used,

10 such as the lactose promoter system, a tryptophan (Trp) promoter system, a beta-lactamase promoter system, or a promoter system from phage lambda. The promoters typically control expression, optionally with an operator sequence, and have ribosome binding site sequences, for example, for initiating and completing transcription and translation.

15 Other microbes, such as yeast, are used for expression. *Saccharomyces* is a suitable host, with suitable vectors having expression control sequences, such a promoters, including 3-phosphoglycerate kinase or other glycolytic enzymes, and an origin of replication, termination sequences, etc. as desired.

20 In addition to microorganisms, mammalian tissue cell culture is used to express and produce the polypeptides of the present invention. Eukaryotic cells are preferred, because a number of suitable host cell lines capable of secreting intact human proteins have been developed in the art, and include the CHO cell lines, various COS cell lines, HeLa cells, myeloma cell lines, Jurkat cells, and so forth. Expression vectors for these cells include

expression control sequences, such as an origin of replication, a promoter, an enhancer, and necessary information processing sites, such as ribosome binding sites, RNA splice sites, polyadenylation sites, and transcriptional terminator sequences. Preferred expression control sequences are promoters derived from immunoglobulin genes, SV40, Adenovirus,

5 Bovine Papilloma Virus, Herpes Virus, and so forth. The vectors containing the DNA segments of interest (e.g., polypeptides encoding a variant polypeptide) are transferred into the host cell by well-known methods, which vary depending on the type of cellular host. For example, calcium chloride transfection is commonly utilized for prokaryotic cells, whereas calcium phosphate treatment or electroporation is useful for other cellular hosts.

10

The method lends itself readily to the formulation of test kits for use in diagnosis. Such a kit comprises a carrier compartmentalized to receive in close confinement one or more containers wherein a first container contains reagents useful in the localization of the labeled probes, such as enzyme substrates. Still other containers contain restriction enzymes, buffers etc., together with instructions for use.

15 The methods provided herein for production of recombinant Ad vectors are a significant improvement over and are significantly different from previously described methods that rely on homologous recombination catalysed by recombinases in host cells or that rely on *in vitro* ligation of viral DNA fragments to produce infectious viral DNA. For viral DNA replication and packaging of viral DNA into virion particles, only three regions of the viral DNA are known to be required in *cis*. These are the left inverted terminal repeat , or ITR, (bp 1 to approximately 103) the packaging signals (approximately 194 to 358 bp) (Hearing and Shenk, 1983, Cell 33: 695-703; Grable and Hearing 1992, J. Virol. 64: 2047-2056)

and the right ITR. Among the regions of the viral genome that encode proteins that function in *trans*, two have been most important in the design and development of adenovirus vectors. These are early region 3 (E3) located between approximately 76 and 86 mu (mu = % distance from the left end of the conventionally oriented genome) and 5 early region 1 (E1) located between approximately 1 and 11 mu. E3 sequences have long been known to be nonessential for virus replication in cultured cells and many viral vectors have deletions of E3 sequences so that the capacity of the resulting vector backbone for insertion of foreign DNA is thereby increased significantly over that allowable by the wild-type virus (Bett, A. J., Prevec, L., and Graham, F. L. Packaging capacity and stability of 10 human adenovirus type 5 vectors. *J. Virol.* 67: 5911- 5921, 1993.). E1 encodes essential functions. However, E1 can also be deleted, providing that the resulting virus is propagated in host cells, such as the 293 cell line, PER-C6 cells, 911 cells, and the like, which contain and express E1 genes and can complement the deficiency of E1(-) viruses.

15 Viruses with foreign DNA inserted in place of E1 sequences, and optionally also carrying deletions of E3 sequences are conventionally known as “first generation” adenovirus vectors. First generation vectors are of proven utility for many applications. They can be used as research tools for high-efficiency transfer and expression of foreign genes in mammalian cells derived from many tissues and from many species. First generation vectors can be used in development of recombinant viral vaccines when the vectors 20 contain and express antigens derived from pathogenic organisms. The vectors can be used for gene therapy, because of their ability to efficiently transfer and express foreign genes *in vivo*, and due to their ability to transduce both replicating and nonreplicating cells in many different tissues. Adenovirus vectors are widely used in these applications.

There are many known ways to construct adenovirus vectors. As discussed above, one of the most commonly employed methods is the so called “two plasmid” technique. In that procedure, two noninfectious bacterial plasmids are constructed with the following properties: each plasmid alone is incapable of generating infectious virus. However, in 5 combination, the plasmids potentially can generate infectious virus, provided the viral sequences contained therein are homologously recombined to constitute a complete infectious virus DNA. According to that method, typically one plasmid is large (approximately 30,000-35,000 nt) and contains most of the viral genome, save for some DNA segment (such as that comprising the packaging signal, or encoding an essential 10 gene) whose deletion renders the plasmid incapable of producing infectious virus or said plasmid contains an insertion such that said viral genome would be too large to be packaged into virions. The second plasmid is typically smaller (eg 5000-10,000 nt), as small size aids in the manipulation of the plasmid DNA by recombinant DNA techniques. Said second plasmid contains viral DNA sequences that partially overlap with sequences 15 present in the larger plasmid. Together with the viral sequences of the larger plasmid, the sequences of the second plasmid can potentially constitute an infectious viral DNA. Cotransfection of a host cell with the two plasmids produces an infectious virus as a result of homologous recombination between the overlapping viral DNA sequences common to the two plasmids. One particular system in general use by those skilled in the art is based 20 on a series of large plasmids known as pBHG10, pBHG11 and pBHGE3 described by Bett, A. J., Haddara, W., Prevec, L. and Graham, F.L: “An efficient and flexible system for construction of adenovirus vectors with insertions or deletions in early regions 1 and 3,” Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. US 91: 8802-8806, 1994 and in US patent application S/N 08/250,885, and published as WO95/00655 (hereby incorporated by reference). Those

plasmids contain most of the viral genome and are capable of producing infectious virus but for the deletion of the packaging signal located at the left end of the wild-type viral genome. The second component of that system comprises a series of “shuttle” plasmids that contain the left approximately 340 nt of the Ad genome including the packaging signal, optionally a polycloning site, or optionally an expression cassette, followed by viral sequences from near the right end of E1 to approximately 15 mu or optionally to a point further rightward in the genome. The viral sequences rightward of E1 overlap with sequences in the pBHG plasmids and, via homologous recombination in cotransfected host cells, produce infectious virus. The resulting viruses contain the packaging signal derived from the shuttle plasmid, as well as any sequences, such as a foreign DNA inserted into the polycloning site or expression cassette located in the shuttle plasmid between the packaging signal and the overlap sequences. Because neither plasmid alone has the capability to produce replicating virus, infectious viral vector progeny can only arise as a result of recombination within the cotransfected host cell. However, as has been noted above, such homologous recombination processes can be inefficient, resulting in variable success in the isolation of vectors and occasional failure, particularly in the hands of those who are not specifically skilled in the art of virology, and more particularly, in the art of adenovirology.

Site-specific recombination catalysed by an efficient recombinase, such as the Cre or FLP recombinase, can be many fold more efficient than homologous recombination. This invention disclosure provides methods and nucleic acid constructs which significantly enhance the ease of production of viral vectors by the two plasmid method by enabling site-specific recombination between individual nucleic acids constructs, neither of which

alone is able to replicate and produce infectious adenovirus. The methodology described herein furthermore utilizes Cre-loxP and other known recombination systems for efficient introduction of mutations of viral genes into the viral genome. Furthermore, the instant methodology is also applicable to insertion of foreign DNA sequences into various regions
5 of the viral DNA, in addition to the E1 region classically used for that purpose. In additional embodiments of this invention, site-specific recombination is utilized in combination with infectious viral DNA having covalently bound terminal protein (DNA-TP complex), at either or both 5' strands of the DNA. Additional embodiments and applications of the site-specific recombination methodology will also become apparent
10 based on the instant disclosure. In addition, as disclosed herein, we have unexpectedly found that inclusion of a head-to-head ITR junction in the shuttle plasmid significantly enhances the efficiency of recombination, whether through homologous recombination or site-specific recombination mechanisms.

15 Having generally described the purposes, advantages, applications and methodology of this invention, the following specific examples are provided to describe in a detailed fashion, various embodiments of this invention. However, it should be appreciated that the invention described herein is not limited to the specifics of the following examples, which are provided merely as a guide for those wishing to practice this invention. The scope of
20 the invention is to be evaluated with reference to the complete disclosure and the claims appended hereto.

It should further be recognized that the following examples using the human adenovirus serotype 5 are not meant to be limiting. One skilled in the art would realize that similar

plasmids, viruses and techniques could be utilized with a different human adenovirus serotype, for example Ad2. Similarly, the use of human Ads is not meant to be limiting since similar plasmids, viruses and techniques could be utilized for different non-human adenoviruses, for example bovine. Similarly, the use of adenoviruses is not meant to be limiting since similar plasmids, viruses and techniques could be utilized with other viruses, both human and non-human, for example baculovirus.

Use of Cre recombinase in these and other examples is not meant to be limiting as a person skilled in the art will readily appreciate that other enzymes capable of catalysing site-specific recombination between DNA sequences recognized by said enzymes could equally be employed in place of the Cre recombinase. An example, not meant to be limiting, of such an enzyme that could be substituted for Cre is the "FLP" recombinase of yeast in combination with its target site FRT (O'Gorman et al. Science 251, 1351, 1991).

A component of the invention is the use of human cells, such as 293 cells or other cells that may be deemed suitable in that they support the replication of the viral components of the invention, that express Cre recombinase and that can be transfected with the plasmids described herein and in the examples which follow, to generate a virus containing the desired modifications such as an insertion of foreign DNA or a modified fibre gene.

It will be appreciated by those skilled in the art that the requisite cell lines can be generated by transfecting 293 cells or other cells, with a plasmid comprising the coding sequences for Cre under the control of suitable regulatory sequences, including a promoter and polyadenylation signal and containing, in addition, a selectable gene encoding, for example, resistance to G418 or histidinol. A person skilled in the art can readily obtain

drug resistant cells that express the Cre recombinase in addition to the drug resistance gene used for selection. It will also be appreciated by one skilled in the art, based on the present disclosure, that host cells can also be induced to transiently express a recombinase by transfection with a plasmid comprising an expression cassette containing said recombinase gene or by infection with a viral vector that expresses the recombinase. Thus the example of 293Cre cells or other permanently transformed recombinase expressing cell lines is not meant to be limiting.

EXAMPLE 1

10 TWO-PLASMID, SITE-SPECIFIC ADENOVIRAL RECOMBINATION

Figure 1 provides a graphic representation of the use of a plasmid, pBHGlox Δ E1,3, which comprises a circularized form of the Ad genome in which part or all of the E1 region, including the packaging signal, is substituted by sequences comprising a bacterial plasmid 15 origin of replication and an antibiotic resistance gene, such as that encoding ampicillin resistance. The plasmid further comprises a loxP site near the 5' end of the pIX gene of the Ad genome. The plasmid may also, optionally, have a deletion of E3 sequences (as shown in this illustration by the symbol Δ E3) which may optionally be substituted with one or more unique cloning sites for insertion of foreign DNA in the Δ E3 region.

20

A second component of the invention comprises a "shuttle plasmid" containing an ITR of the virus genome and a packaging signal, a polycloning site into which may be inserted a foreign DNA such as that encoding for bacterial β -galactosidase (LacZ) or any other gene, expression of which is desired either in a gene therapeutic or vaccine context, and a loxP

site inserted in the same relative orientation as the loxP site in pBHGloxΔE1,3. To obtain high-efficiency rescue of the foreign DNA into an infectious viral vector, the two plasmids are cotransfected into human cells, such as 293Cre cells, PER-C6 cells, 911 cells, and the like, engineered to express Cre and which, in addition, express the E1 region of the Ad genome. It should be appreciated that the manner of provision of the recombinase is not critical. The recombinase may be constitutively expressed by the cell into which the two plasmids are introduced. The recombinase may be provided in trans, via a third plasmid, or in cis, by inclusion of a recombinase expression cassette in one of the introduced plasmids. In addition, it will be appreciated that any recombinase which efficiently induces site-specific recombination between sequences present on the two plasmids may be employed according to this methodology. Thus, the FLP recombinase, which recognizes the sequences known as FRT, may be used in place of the Cre/loxP combination, and thus, wherever Cre or loxP are mentioned herein, such mention should be read to include any other site-specific recombination system now known or henceforth discovered, when applied to the specific techniques disclosed and claimed herein.

Cre-mediated recombination results in formation of joint molecules that generate infectious viruses containing the foreign DNA insert. Because pBHGloxΔE1,3 lacks the viral packaging signal, the only viruses that can form are those containing the packaging signal and foreign DNA of the shuttle plasmid. These are generated in large numbers because of the high-efficiency and specificity of Cre recombinase, and there is no background of non-recombinant virus in contrast to a method such as that of Hardy et al., J. Virol. 71(3):1842-1849, (1997), which, even after three sequential passages in Cre

expressing cells, results in a vector preparation still contaminated by starting (non-recombinant) virus.

EXAMPLE 2

5 COMPARISON OF HOMOLOGOUS AND SITE-SPECIFIC RECOMBINATION

Figure 2 illustrates use of a modified shuttle plasmid wherein Ad sequences from about 10mu to about 15mu are present to the right of the lox site. These sequences permit homologous recombination to occur in the absence or presence of Cre. A shuttle plasmid 10 such as that shown in this figure is generally used only for comparison purposes to assess the relative efficiency of homologous versus Cre-mediate recombination. As will be seen in the subsequent description of the invention, in the presence of Cre, overlapping sequences are unnecessary and can be omitted, although this disclosure does not require the absence of such sequences.

15

EXAMPLE 3

SEQUENCES USEFUL IN THE PRODUCTION OF PLASMIDS WHICH MAY BE
RECOMBINED IN A SITE-SPECIFIC MANNER TO PRODUCE ADENOVIRAL
VECTORS

20

Figure 3 illustrates sets of oligonucleotides used in various cloning procedures. The double stranded oligonucleotide (AB3233/3234) contains a loxP site with restriction sites for *Scal* and *EcoRI* at one end of the oligo outside of the loxP region. When annealed, the oligonucleotides have *BamHI/Bgl* II overhangs which are designed for cloning into and

concomitant destruction of the *Bgl*II site. The internal *Scal* site found in (AB3233/3234) was designed to facilitate determination of the orientation of the linker and also for subsequent deletion of Ad5 sequences from m.u. 9.8-15.8. The second linker (AB14626/14627) has *Eco*RI and *Sal*I overhangs and a multiple cloning region containing *Sma*I, *Bgl*II, *Hind*III and *Scal* restriction sites.

EXAMPLE 4

CONSTRUCTION OF BACTERIAL PLASMIDS CONTAINING CIRCULARIZED FORMS OF THE ADENOVIRUS GENOME SUITABLE FOR RESCUE OF VIRAL VECTORS USING SITE-SPECIFIC RECOMBINATION ACCORDING TO THE GENERAL SCHEME ILLUSTRATED ACCORDING TO FIGURE 1

Figure 4 illustrates production of a plasmid, pBHGloxΔE1,3, a derivative of pBHG10, modified to contain a *loxP* site at the 3' end of the E1 deletion. As can be seen with reference to the figure, this plasmid was constructed by replacing the 4604 bp *Bst*1107I fragment from pBHG10 with the 2326 bp *Eco*RV/*Bst*1107I fragment from pΔE1sp1Alox. The plasmid pΔE1sp1Alox (Figure 5) was constructed by inserting an oligonucleotide bearing a *loxP* site (comprised of annealed oligos AB3233 and AB 3234) into the *Bgl*II site of pΔE1sp1A. Foreign sequences can be inserted into the unique *Pac*I site of pBHGloxΔE1,3 for rescue of genes in E3. The plasmid illustrated in Figure 4 can be selected from the series pBHG10 (as illustrated), pBHG11, pBHGE3, or like plasmid, for modification to contain a *lox P* site near the 3' end of E1 ie. near the 5' end of the pIX gene at approximately nt 3520 in the conventional sequence of Ad5. Optionally E1 sequences from approximately nt 188 to approximately 3520 may be deleted from said plasmid. Like

the parental plasmids (such as pBHG10, pBHG11 or pBHGE3) the modified pBHG derivative (eg. pBHGloxΔE1,3, pBHGdX1Plox, pBHGE3lox, or like plasmid) lacks the packaging signal (ψ), and is consequently incapable of producing infectious virus in transfected host cells.

5

Figure 4a illustrates the construction of a plasmid, pBHGdX1Plox, containing a modified E3 deletion (taken from pFG23dX1P) and a lox site 5' of the pIX gene. The plasmid pFG23dX1P was constructed by inserting an oligonucleotide containing a *PacI* site (AB14566; 5'- CTAGCTTAATTAAG -3', SEQ ID NO.:9) into the *XbaI* site of pFG23dX1. The plasmid pNG17 was constructed by cloning the 6724 bp *SpeI/ClaI* fragment from pBHGloxΔE1,3 into pBluescript. The plasmid pNG17dX1P was constructed by replacing the 1354 bp *SpeI/NdeI* fragment from pNG17 with the 2129 bp *SpeI/NdeI* fragment from pFG23dX1P. The plasmid pBHGdX1P was constructed by replacing the 6724 bp *SpeI/ClaI* fragment from pBHGloxΔE1,3 with the 7495 bp *SpeI/ClaI* fragment from pNG17dX1P.

Figure 4b illustrates the construction of a plasmid containing a wild-type E3 region and a loxP site 5' of the pIX gene. The plasmid pBHGE3lox was constructed by replacing the 6724 bp *SpeI/ClaI* fragment from pBHGloxΔE1,3 with the 9377 bp *SpeI/ClaI* fragment from pBHGE3.

EXAMPLE 5CONSTRUCTION OF SHUTTLE PLASMIDS FOR RECOMBINATION WITH
ADENOVIRAL RESCUE PLASMID, CONSTRUCTED ACCORDING TOEXAMPLE 4

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As described above, a second embodiment of the invention comprises a shuttle plasmid selected from a series of plasmids containing, minimally: the left end of the viral genome including all or most of the left Inverted Terminal Repeat (ITR nts 1- 103 of the Ad 5 DNA) and the packaging sequence, and optionally a polycloning site or optionally an expression cassette. With reference to figures 5-8, such shuttle plasmids are modified to contain a *lox P* site in the same orientation as the *loxP* site in the pBHG derivative, (see Example 4, referred to herein as the “rescue plasmid”), said *loxP* site being positioned in said shuttle plasmid to the right of said polycloning site or said expression cassette.

15 **Figure 5** illustrates the construction of shuttle plasmids derived from pΔE1SP1A and pΔE1SP1B wherein *loxP* sites are introduced 5' of the pIX gene. The plasmids, pΔE1sp1A and pΔE1SP1B are left end shuttle plasmids containing Ad5 sequences from m.u. 0-15.8 with E1 sequences deleted between m.u. 1 and 9.8. They are identical except that the restriction sites in the multiple cloning region are reversed. A synthetic *loxP* linker (AB3233/3234) was introduced into the *Bgl*II site of each plasmid generating pΔE1SP1A_{lox} and pΔE1SP1B_{lox}. Ad5 sequences from m.u. 9.8-15.8 were removed by digesting the plasmids with *Nru*I, partially cutting with *Scal*I followed by self-ligation. The plasmids thus generated are called pΔE1SP1A_{lox}Δ and pΔE1SP1B_{lox}Δ.

Figure 6 illustrates the construction of pMH4lox and pMH4lox Δ plasmids that contain a promoter and polyadenylation signal and polycloning sites for insertion of foreign DNA to produce expression cassettes in which transcription is driven by the murine cytomegalovirus immediate early gene promoter. Plasmid pVDB3 is derived from pMH4 but contains a pUC-based origin of replication, rather than a pBR322 origin. It contains Ad5 sequences from m.u. 0-15.8 with E1 sequences deleted between m.u. 1 and 9.8 and substituted with an expression cassette: a 0.5kbp (-491 to +36) fragment of the MCMV IE promoter, unique restriction enzyme sites for cloning (*Eco* RI, *Nhe* I, *Bam* HI and *Sal* I) followed by an SV40 polyadenylation signal. To make pMH4lox, a loxP linker (AB3233/3234) was introduced into the *Bgl*II site of pVDB3. Ad5 sequences m.u. 9.8-15.8 were deleted from pMH4lox by digesting with *Hind* III, treating with the Klenow fragment of *E. coli* DNA polymerase then partially digesting with *Sca* I followed by self-ligation. The resulting shuttle plasmid, pMH4lox Δ , can be used with pBHGlox Δ E1,3 to produce Ad vectors via Cre/lox mediated recombination. To make pMH4lox Δ a more flexible plasmid for cloning purposes, a linker (AB14626/14627), containing a different multiple cloning region, was introduced between the *Eco* RI and *Sal* I sites resulting in pMH4lox Δ link.

Figure 6a illustrates the construction of plasmid pVDB3. A *Pvu*I to *Bst* 11071 fragment from pMH4 (Microbix Biosystems) was ligated to a *Bst* 11071 to *Pvu* I fragment from pD47E1 containing a pUC-based (pNEB193, New England Biolabs) origin of plasmid DNA replication to generate pVDB3.

Figure 7 illustrates construction of HCMV loxP plasmids in which transcription of foreign genes is regulated by the human cytomegalovirus immediate early gene promoter. The plasmids pCA13 and pCA14 contain the Ad5 genomic sequences from m.u. 0 to 15.8 with E1 sequences between m.u. 1 and 9.8 replaced by the HCMV IE promoter (-299 to +72, relative to the transcription start), a polycloning region and an SV40 polyadenylation signal. (Plasmids pCA13 and pCA14 are available from Microbix Biosystems). The expression cassette in each case is oriented parallel to the direction of E1 transcription (rightwards). The only difference between pCA13 and pCA14 is in the orientation of the multiple cloning region. The plasmids pCA13($\Delta Bg/II$) and pCA14($\Delta Bg/II$) were generated by digesting pCA13 and pCA14 partially with *Bg/II*, Klenowing and self-ligating. A synthetic loxP oligonucleotide (AB3233/3234) was introduced into the unique *Bg/II* sites of pCA13($\Delta Bg/II$) and pCA14($\Delta Bg/II$) producing pCA13lox and pCA14lox respectively. Ad5 sequences, m.u. 9.8-15.8, were removed from pCA13lox and pCA14lox by cutting each plasmid with *NruI* and partially digesting each with *ScaI* followed by self ligation. The resulting plasmids, pCA13lox Δ and pCA14lox Δ are useful shuttle plasmids for the rescue of first generation Ad vectors by Cre/lox recombination.

Figure 8 illustrates the construction of a plasmid, pCA36lox Δ , for rescue of the β -galactosidase gene into adenovirus vectors. Naturally, the rescued gene may be any foreign gene, and is not restricted to the use of a marker gene, such as the marker beta-gal gene, which is used herein for illustrative purposes. The plasmid pCA36 contains the β -gal cDNA under control of the short MCMV IE promoter (-491 to +36) followed by an SV40 polyadenylation signal. Plasmid pCA36 was made by inserting the LacZ gene into pMH4 (available from Microbix Biosystems) and is described by Addison, C. L., Hitt, M.,

Kunskens, D. and Graham, F. L., in "Comparison of the human versus murine cytomegalovirus immediate early gene promoters for transgene expression in adenoviral vectors," J. Gen. Virol. 78: 1653-1661, 1997." A synthetic loxP site (AB3233/3234) was introduced into the *Bgl* II site of pCA36 resulting in pCA36lox. This plasmid was then digested with *Nru* I and partially digested with *Sca* I, a 7646bp fragment was gel purified and self ligated yielding pCA36loxΔ. This plasmid contains Ad sequences from m.u. 0-1, and not only has the deletion of E1 sequences present in the parental plasmids pCA36 and pCA36lox, but additionally is deleted of Ad5 sequences from m.u. 9.8-15.8.

10

EXAMPLE 6

DEMONSTRATION OF ENHANCED EFFICIENCY OF SITE-SPECIFIC
RECOMBINATION IN COMPARISON WITH HOMOLOGOUS
RECOMBINATION

15 In a third embodiment of the invention, two plasmids containing loxP or other recombinase recognition sites are cotransfected into 293Cre or other appropriate cells (expressing an appropriate recombinase, Cre for purposes of this example). The Cre enzyme catalyses site-specific recombination between said lox P sites present in each vector. As illustrated in Figure 1, it will be readily seen by one skilled in the art that Cre-
20 mediated recombination between said lox P sites generates a viable virus by joining pBHG sequences to a DNA segment containing ψ and ITR sequences. Furthermore, by virtue of the design and construction of the pBHG derivative and the shuttle plasmid, the resulting viral vector contains the expression cassette located to the left of the lox P site in said shuttle plasmid, thereby providing a simple and efficient means for isolating viral vectors

containing foreign DNA insertions and expression cassettes for synthesis of proteins from foreign genes.

To test and demonstrate the validity of the approaches outlined above and to determine the
5 degree of improvement in efficiency of vector isolation compared to known methods, a number of experiments were conducted in which a vector carrying a LacZ expression cassette inserted near the left end of the Ad genome was constructed. The efficiency of Cre/lox mediated recombination was compared with that of homologous recombination, by measuring the numbers of virus plaques obtained from cotransfections of 293 cells
10 versus the numbers obtained following cotransfections of 293Cre4 cells (see, for example, US patent application serial number 08/473,168, filed June 7, 1995; see also WO96/40955, hereby incorporated by reference).

The results shown in Table 1 indicate that Cre/lox mediated recombination
15 (cotransfections of 293Cre4 cells with plasmids that both contain lox sites) was approximately 35-fold more efficient than homologous recombination (cotransfections of 293 cells or cotransfections of 293Cre4 cells with plasmids that do not both contain lox sites). A 35-fold increase represents a very significant and unexpectedly high improvement over efficiencies of vector rescue when virus isolation is dependent on homologous
20 recombination. Coupled with the fact that the only infectious virus present in the transfected cell preparation are recombinants, rather than contaminating starting virus, the efficiency, cleanliness and convenience of this method in comparison to known methods represent significant advances in the art. Thus, with this new method it will be possible to reduce the amount of plasmid DNA used in cotransfections and reduce the number of

dishes of 293 (293Cre) cells needed in cotransfections for rescue of viral vectors. It will also aid in the rescue of constructs which, for unknown reasons, might be otherwise difficult to rescue (e.g. rescue of vectors containing large foreign DNA inserts in E1 is often inefficient for reasons that are not known).

5

To confirm that the enhanced efficiency of plaque formation following cotransfection of 293Cre cells with pCA36 + pBHGloxΔE1,3 was due to Cre-lox dependent recombination (versus, for example, enhanced efficiency of homologous recombination) we constructed a derivative of pCA36lox, named pCA36loxΔ (see Figure 8), from which overlapping Ad sequences to the right of the lox site had been removed, thus virtually eliminating any possibility of homologous recombination. This new shuttle plasmid was then tested for ability to generate vectors in a second experiment in which 293 or 293Cre cells were cotransfected with this plasmid or with pCA36 or pCA36lox for comparison along with pBHGloxΔE1,3. It can be seen from the results shown in Table 2 that pCA36loxΔ only generated viral plaques following cotransfection of 293Cre cells with pBHGloxΔE1,3. In contrast pCA36 or pCA36lox were able to generate small numbers of plaques on 293 cells. However, again, the efficiency was markedly enhanced if 293Cre cells were cotransfected with pCA36lox and pBHGloxΔE1,3. Thus the use of Cre-lox recombination results in a surprisingly efficient system for rescue of foreign DNA into Adenovirus vectors.

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To confirm that transfection of 293Cre cells with pCA36lox (a lacZ-containing shuttle plasmid with a loxP site located between the expression cassette and the pIX coding sequence as illustrated in Fig. 8) and pBHGloxΔE1,3 resulted in viruses containing the desired insert of foreign DNA, 26 recombinant plaques were isolated, expanded and

analyzed for expression of LacZ. All 26 (100%) were positive for β -galactosidase expression. Furthermore, analysis of the structure of the viruses confirmed that all 26 had the expected DNA structure illustrated in Figure 1. Further confirmation of the efficiency and specificity of the Cre/lox system for rescue of expression cassettes was obtained 5 through analysis of 6 plaque isolates obtained by cotransfection of 293Cre cells with pCA36lox Δ and pBHGlox Δ E1,3 (Table 2). All 6 plaque isolates expressed β -galactosidase and all 6 had the expected DNA structure illustrated in Figure 1. Because 100% of recombinant viruses produced by cotransfection of 293Cre cells with plasmids containing appropriately engineered lox sites have the correct structure and express the 10 transgene, (β -galactosidase in these examples), it will be appreciated by those skilled in the art that one could readily produce recombinant viruses carrying other foreign DNA inserts by constructing shuttle plasmids derived from the plasmids shown in Figures 5, 6 and 7 or similar plasmids, and cotransfected said modified shuttle plasmids into 293Cre 15 or like cells, along with pBHGlox Δ E1,3 or similar pBHG plasmids containing a lox site near the end of E1. It will be further appreciated by those skilled in the art that because of the high-efficiency of rescue with this approach, only small numbers of 293Cre cultures and small amounts of DNA need be used to obtain the desired recombinant viruses. Furthermore, because only the desired recombinant viruses are obtained from said 20 cotransfections, it would not be essential to plaque purify and analyze viral progeny obtained according to the method of this invention. In addition, after the initial isolation of the recombinant viruses from 293 Cre cells, said viruses can be propagated in host cells such as 293, 911 or PERC-6 cells or the like which do not express recombinase.

EXAMPLE 7SITE-SPECIFIC SHUTTLE PLASMID-VIRUS RECOMBINATION

Hardy et al., J. Virol. 1997, Mar;71(3):1842-1849, and see also WO97/32481 disclosed
5 a method whereby an infectious DNA vector was used in combination with a plasmid in
combination with lox-Cre recombination to generate recombinant adenoviruses. However,
according to that method, residual infectious starter virus remains in the recombinant virus
preparation, requiring repeated passage of the preparation in a Cre expressing cell to
eliminate this background. An advancement to such techniques is provided herein by
10 combination of Cre-lox recombination and use of adenoviral DNA bound to the adenoviral
terminal protein (TP). The result of this combination is high-efficiency infection
combined with site-specific recombination.

The use of a two plasmid system for isolation of viral vectors or modified viruses is not
15 meant to be limiting. From the instant disclosure, it will be appreciated by those skilled in
the art that one could use, as one component of the system, viral DNA from a modified
virus whose genome contains *lox P* sites at useful positions. An excellent example, not
meant to be limiting, is use of AdLC8, AdLC8c or AdLC8cluc described by Parks, R. J.,
Chen, L., Anton, M., Sankar, U., Rudnicki, M. A. and Graham, F. L., in "A new helper-
20 dependent adenovirus vector system: removal of helper virus by Cre-mediated excision of
the viral packaging signal," Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. U.S. 93: 13565-13570, 1996. These
viruses contain a "floxed" packaging signal, which is excised following virus infection of
293Cre cells. Therefore, cotransfection of 293Cre cells with viral DNA extracted from
AdLC8, AdLC8c or AdLC8cluc in such a way as to retain the covalent linkage to TP,

according to methods taught by Sharp et al., "The infectivity of adenovirus 5 DNA-protein complex," Virology, 1976 Dec;75(2):442-456; Chinnadurai, et al., "Enhanced infectivity of adenovirus type 2 DNA and a DNA-protein complex," J. Virol. 1978 Apr;26(1):195-199, and a shuttle plasmid such as that illustrated in Figures 5, 6, 7 or 8 results in Cre-mediated recombination to generate a new vector containing the sequences derived from the shuttle plasmid, spanning the region from the ITR and packaging signal of the shuttle across the optional polycloning site or optional expression cassette to the *lox P* site of said shuttle plasmid. For example, not meant to be limiting, as illustrated in **Figure 8a**, using a lacZ-encoding plasmid, similar to that shown in Figure 8, and AdLC8c DNA-TP, one skilled in the art could readily isolate the desired recombinant virus containing lacZ or other foreign genes by cotransfection of 293Cre cells with DNA extracted from AdLC8c-TP and said Lac Z-encoding plasmid. Optionally, as illustrated in **Figure 8b**, one could cotransfect 293Cre cells with restriction endonuclease treated AdLC8c DNA-TP and a shuttle plasmid selected from the set of plasmids illustrated in Figures 5, 6, 7 and 8 to produce infectious virus by Cre-mediated recombination. The viral DNA extracted from AdLC8c according to this method retains the terminal protein which has been shown to increase the efficiency of transduction of recipient cells with said DNA (Sharp PA, Moore C, Haverty JL, "The infectivity of adenovirus 5 DNA-protein complex," Virology 1976 Dec;75(2):442-456). It will be apparent to those skilled in the art that the left most lox site is not needed and may optionally be deleted if AdLC8cDNA-TP is to be cut with restriction enzymes prior cotransfection. Furthermore, optionally, after restriction enzyme digestion, the large right end fragment of AdLC8cDNA-TP could be purified prior to cotransfection.

Figure 8c is a diagrammatic representation of a method for constructing shuttle plasmids expressing Cre. The Cre expression cassette was obtained from the plasmid pLC2 (Chen, L., Anton, M. and Graham, F.L., "Production and characterization of human 293 cell lines expressing the site-specific recombinase Cre," Somat. Cell and Molec. Genet. 22:477-488, 1996), as a 2175 bp *Bgl*II fragment which was end-modified with Klenow DNA polymerase and inserted into the *Ehe*I site of pCA36*lox*Δ to generate pCA36*lox*ΔCreR and pCA36*lox*ΔCreT. The plasmid pCA35*lox*ΔCreITR was constructed by replacing the 1402 bp *Scal*/*Kpn*I fragment in pCA36*lox*ΔCreT with the 2753 bp *Scal*/*Kpn*I fragment from the plasmid pRP1029. Plasmid pCA35*lox*ΔCreITR contains ITR junctions which are known to be functionally capable of generating replicating linear Ad DNA molecules (Graham, F.L., "Covalently closed circles of human adenovirus DNA are infectious," The EMBO J. 3, 2917-2922, 1984).

Figure 8d provides a schematic representation of a cotransfection experiment wherein a pBHGloxΔE1,3 plasmid and a "Lox" shuttle plasmid expressing Cre are introduced into 293 cells in order to generate Ad expression vectors, without having to use cells which stably express Cre. This technique is applicable to any cell type suitable for Ad vector generation, including but not limited to 293 cells, and PER-C6 cells (Fallaux et al., Hum. Gene Ther. 1998, Sep. 1;9(13):1909-17), 911 cells (Fallaux et al., Hum. Gene Ther. 1996 Jan. 20;7(2):215-222), or other cells. A shuttle plasmid such as pCA35*lox*ΔCreITR of figure 8c is also suitable for generation of an Ad vector. The efficiency of Ad vector rescue by cotransfection with pBHGloxΔE1,3 and various shuttle plasmids is summarized in Tables 3 and 4. It can be seen from the results in Table 4 that inclusion of an ITR

junction in the shuttle plasmid increases the efficiency of rescue significantly. Thus, provision of an ITR junction is a preferred embodiment.

Insertion of an expression cassette encoding Cre recombinase in the shuttle plasmid is not
5 meant to be limiting as one skilled in the art will appreciate that one could also insert a Cre
cassette in the larger plasmid, pBHGloxΔE1,3. An example, not meant to be limiting, is
diagrammed in Figure 8e, which illustrates the construction of such a plasmid. It will be
appreciated that the Cre expression cassette could be carried by either of the two plasmids
used in the cotransfections such as that illustrated in Figure 1, or by both of them, so that
10 Cre is supplied at adequate levels in cotransfected 293 cells to catalyse efficient
recombination between the lox sites of the cotransfected plasmids. Thus mention of the
use of 293Cre cells or like cells expressing Cre recombinase is not meant to be limiting.

Figure 8e demonstrates the construction of an Ad genomic plasmid encoding Cre. The
15 plasmid pBHGloxΔ was constructed by collapsing pBHGloxΔE1,3 with *Spe*I and *Psh*AI.
The Cre expression cassette, taken from the plasmid pLC2 as a 2175 bp *Bgl*II fragment,
was inserted into the *Bam*HI site of pBHGloxΔ to generate pBHGloxΔCreR and
pBHGloxΔCreL. The 1238 bp *Bst*1107I/*Pac*I fragment from pBHGloxΔCreR and
pBHGloxΔCreL was replaced with the 22380 bp *Bst*1107I/*Pac*I fragment from
20 pBHGloxΔE1,3 to generate pBHGloxCreR and pBHGloxCreL, respectively.

EXAMPLE 8RESCUE OF FOREIGN DNA AND MUTATIONS INTO ANY DESIREDLOCATION IN THE ADENOVIRAL GENOME

5 The above examples illustrating rescue of foreign DNA into the E1 region of Ad vectors
are not meant to be limiting. It will be appreciated by those skilled in the art that one could
equally follow the instructions outlined above to construct similar plasmids for the rescue
of insertions or mutations or deletions into E1 or other regions of the viral genome. For
example, not meant to be limiting, one could construct a series of analogous plasmids
10 suitable for rescue of fibre mutations into the viral genome or for rescue of foreign DNA
inserts in the E3 region of the viral genome into infectious virus. An example, not meant
to be limiting, is provided in **Figure 9**, which is a diagrammatic representation of a method
for rescuing fibre mutations into infectious virus using Cre-loxP recombination.
Cotransfection of 293Cre cells with pFG173lox and a shuttle plasmid containing a loxP
15 site 5' of the fibre gene results in site-specific recombination between the lox sites and
rescue into infectious virus of the adenoviral sequences of the shuttle, which sequences
may optionally contain a mutated fibre gene.

20 **Figure 9a** is a diagrammatic representation of a method for constructing a plasmid
containing a lox site and ampicillin resistance gene substituting for the fibre gene. Starting
with a plasmid such as pAB14lox, construction of which is described in Figure 14, the
DNA sequences between the Cla I site and the Blp I site containing fibre are substituted
with a DNA segment containing the ampicillin resistance gene and a plasmid origin of

DNA replication (which may optionally be obtained by restriction endonuclease digestion of an ampicillin resistant plasmid such as pCA14 (Microbix Biosystems)).

Figure 9b is a diagrammatic representation of a method for combining the plasmid of Fig. 5 9a with pFG173 to produce pFG173lox for rescuing fibre mutations into infectious virus using Cre-lox recombination. The plasmid pAB14lox Δ illustrated in Figure 9a comprises Ad sequences 3' of fibre to mu 100. The plasmid additionally contains viral DNA sequences 5' of fibre, but has all of the fibre coding sequences deleted and substituted with a plasmid origin of DNA replication and an antibiotic resistance gene, such as for 10 ampicillin resistance. Sequences from pAB14lox Δ can be recombined with pFG173 (Microbix Biosystems) by homologous recombination in E. coli (Chartier C, Degryse E, Gantzer M, Dieterle A, Pavirani A, Mehtali M., "Efficient generation of recombinant adenovirus vectors by homologous recombination in Escherichia coli," J Virol 1996 Jul;70(7):4805-4810). The resulting plasmid, pFG173lox, has a deletion of sequences 15 comprising all of the fibre gene or optionally part of the fibre gene or optionally all or part of E4 or optionally a deletion of all or part of both fibre and E4, and is consequently unable to produce infectious virus following transfection of cells. However, on recombination with a plasmid such as pFG23dX1lox or a similar plasmid, infectious virus 20 can be readily generated, as illustrated in Figure 9. Said recombination can be efficiently catalysed by Cre recombinase, if pFG173lox and pFG23dX1lox are cotransfected into 293Cre cells or similar host cells expressing Cre recombinase.

Construction of plasmids suitable for rescue of fibre or E4 gene mutations or deletions or substitutions can be readily accomplished by one skilled in the art based on the present

disclosure. An example, not meant to be limiting, of the construction of one such plasmid is illustrated in **Figure 10**, which is a diagrammatic representation of a plasmid containing the right approximately 40% of the virus genome, wherein a *lox P* site has been inserted near the 5' end of the fibre gene. PFG23dX1 contains the right approximately 40% of the
5 Ad 5 genome from nt 21563 (mu 60) to approximately the right end of the genome (mu 100) cloned into the BamH I site of pBR322 and additionally has a deletion of Ad5 sequences from 28593 to 30471, comprising most of E3 (Haj-Ahmad, Y. and Graham, F.L., "Development of a helper independent human adenovirus vector and its use in the transfer of the Herpes Simplex Virus thymidine kinase gene," J. Virol. 57, 267-274, 10 1986). PFG23dX1 was digested with XbaI and a synthetic oligonucleotide (AB6920/AB6921, Figure 3) containing a *loxP* site was inserted. The resulting plasmid, pFG23dX1lox, can be used for generation of infectious virus by cotransfection of 293Cre cells with a plasmid such as pFG173lox (Figure 9). Optionally, viral genes, such as those encoding fibre or genes of E4 can be mutated in pFG23dX1lox and the resulting mutations
15 rescued into virus. Because Ad sequences 5' of the *lox* site (counterclockwise in the diagram) are not necessary when Cre-mediated site specific, rather than homologous, recombination is used to generate infectious virus, viral sequences between a unique Bst 11071 site and a BsiW1 site immediately 5' of the *lox P* site were deleted to generate pFG23dX1lox.
20

One skilled in the art would appreciate, based on the instant disclosure, that just as Cre recombinase may be provided by inserting a Cre expression cassette in one or another or both of the cotransfecting plasmids to facilitate recombination between plasmids designed to rescue mutations or insertions in E1, similarly, one may insert said expression cassette

into either or both of the plasmids to be recombined as diagrammed in figure 9 so that site specific recombination can be achieved in host cells that do not express the recombinase constitutively. In a preferred embodiment, the shuttle plasmid thus modified would be further modified to contain a junction of ITRs as the results shown in Table 4 indicate that said junction results in a significant improvement in efficiency of virus production. As in the examples illustrated in Figures 8c and 8e, said plasmids would most often be designed so that the Cre expression cassette would not be rescued into the infectious viral genomes that are thus generated.

10 Examples illustrating rescue of mutations into infectious virus are not meant to be limiting as one skilled in the art could readily appreciate that the methods described herein are equally employed to rescue insertions of foreign DNA into the viral genome. An example of a suitable plasmid that is readily constructed is pFG23dX1LacZlox. **Figure 11** is a diagrammatic representation of said plasmid wherein a foreign DNA, such as a gene encoding bacterial lacZ, is inserted between the *lox P* site and the fibre gene. In this example, not meant to be limiting, an expression cassette encoding β-galactosidase is inserted into the *Cla I* site adjacent to the *loxP* of pFG23dX1lox (Figure 10) for subsequent rescue into infectious virus by the method illustrated in Figure 9. It will be appreciated by those skilled in the art that other foreign DNAs could readily be rescued 15 into infectious virus genomes by the methods illustrated above. Said foreign DNA segment could be a separate expression cassette or a fusion of sequences encoding peptide sequences to sequences encoding fibre, said peptide sequences representing, for example, a ligand to a cell surface receptor such that the rescued virus expressing a modified fibre 20 would have novel and useful cell attachment properties. This example is not meant to be

limiting as it will be appreciated by one skilled in the art that lox P sites can readily be introduced into other positions of the viral DNA for substitution of other virion genes with mutated counterparts.

- 5 These examples are not meant to be limiting as one could construct a plasmid similar to pFG173lox from which other viral genes have been deleted such as, for example, those of E1 such that the resulting viruses generated by Cre-mediated recombination are E1 deleted viruses.

10

EXAMPLE 9

USE OF ENGINEERED ADENOVIRUSES PRODUCED ACCORDING TO THIS
INVENTION

- The use of the two plasmid system in combination with Cre-mediated site-specific recombination is not meant to be limiting as one skilled in the art will readily appreciate that, as taught for the generation of viruses carrying E1 mutations, deletions and insertions, one could employ viral DNA isolated from suitably engineered viruses for the manipulation of the viral genome by Cre-mediated recombination. For example, as illustrated in **Figures 12 and 13**, 293Cre cells are cotransfected with DNA extracted from a virus containing a floxed fibre gene in such a way as to retain either or both terminal proteins, TP. Optionally the DNA is digested with restriction enzymes that cut sequences between the lox sites prior to cotransfections. It will be apparent to those skilled in the art, based on the instant disclosure, that the right most lox site is not needed and may optionally be deleted or omitted if DNA-TP is to be cut with restriction enzymes prior to

cotransfection. As with the two plasmid method, the method of figures 12 and 13 is employed to rescue mutations in the fibre gene or in E4 or to rescue foreign DNA inserts as in Figure 13.

- 5 To confirm that it is possible to insert into the adenovirus genome lox sites that flank a gene such as that encoding fibre, the plasmid shown in **Figure 14**, called pAB14flox, was constructed. This plasmid contains a lox site inserted into the unique Bp I site in pAB14, which is located between the 3' terminus of the fibre gene and the coding regions of E4 genes. A second lox site was inserted into the XbaI site upstream of fibre. PAB14flox
10 (fibre flanked by lox sites) was rescued into infectious virus by cotransfection with pFG173 (described in Hanke, T., Graham, F.L., V. Lulitanond and D.C. Johnson, "Herpes simplex virus IgG Fc receptors induced using recombinant adenovirus vectors expressing glycoproteins E and I," *Virology* 177: 437-444, 1990. PFG173 is available from Microbix Biosystems) as illustrated in **Figure 15**, to produce Adfloxfibre. In two experiments, 293
15 cells were cotransfected with pAB14flox and pFG173, and two plaque isolates were obtained in each experiment (from 8 cotransfected dishes of 293 cells in experiment 1, and from 4 dishes in experiment 2). Two plaques were expanded and analyzed and shown to have the expected DNA structure as illustrated in Figure 15.
- 20 Upon transfection of 293Cre cells with DNA-TP complex of an Ad virus, such as Adfloxfibre-TP depicted in Figure 15, said floxed fibre gene is excised by site-specific recombination between similarly oriented *lox* P sites, resulting in noninfectious viral DNA (as fibre is an essential component of the virion) as illustrated in Figure 12. Cotransfection of said 293Cre cells with a plasmid containing a single *lox* P site upstream of fibre, such

as pFG23dX1lox, optionally carrying a fibre or E4 gene mutation or insertion of foreign DNA, results in high-efficiency site-specific recombination between the plasmid and viral DNA and results in a virus whose fibre gene is derived from the plasmid as illustrated in **Figure 12 or Figure 13**. Therefore, it will be readily appreciated by one skilled in the art that mutations, deletions or other modifications engineered in and around the fibre gene of the plasmid, are rescued into the infectious virus genome. As an example, not meant to be limiting, the combination of plasmid, virus DNA and recombinase as illustrated in Figures 12 and 13 leads to high-efficiency substitution of wild-type fibre with modified fibre genes for production of mutant viruses whose virion capsids contain altered fibre.

10

As a further example of the utility of this approach, a foreign DNA segment is introduced into a plasmid, such as pFG23dX1lox, between the lox site and the coding sequences of fibre, such that said foreign DNA segment is rescued into virus by cotransfection of 293Cre cells with DNA prepared from Adlox2fibre (Figure 13). As in the examples described previously for use of the two plasmid system, said foreign DNA segment could be a separate expression cassette or could be a fusion of peptide sequences such as a ligand to a cell surface receptor.

15

Table 5 provides results documenting the efficiency with which Cre mediated recombination can be used to generate infectious virus by cotransfection of 293Cre cells as illustrated in figure 9. It is apparent that the efficiency of rescue is comparable to that shown in Tables 1 and 2 and is several fold higher than the efficiency of homologous recombination (pFG173 + pFG23dX1).

EXAMPLE 10USE OF ALTERNATE ADENOVIRAL VECTOR SYSTEMS ACCORDING TO
THIS INVENTION

5 Those skilled in the art will recognize, based on the instant disclosure, that in the system described herein according to figure 8b, the left most lox site is not essential when the viral DNA is digested with enzymes such as those depicted, namely AsuII and/or SwaI. It will also be recognized that enhanced rescue of mutations or inserts into the viral genome by cotransfection of cells with a plasmid plus a viral DNA fragment with TP does not require 10 a TP at both ends so the large viral DNA fragment generated by AsuII and/or SwaI digestion and having a TP at the right end only is sufficient for this system to operate efficiently. Similarly in the systems disclosed according to figures 12 and 13, only the lox site 5' of fibre is necessary if the viral DNA-TP is cleaved with one or more enzymes that cut to the right, e.g. in fibre or in E4. If there are not naturally occurring restriction sites 15 suitable for this purpose, such sites may easily be engineered by those of ordinary skill in the art, based on the present disclosure. For example we have identified a Blp I site between the 3' end of fibre and the coding sequences for E4 that can be used to insert a synthetic DNA. As illustrated in figure 14 we inserted a lox DNA sequence into this site but we could easily have introduced DNA containing a restriction endonuclease site that 20 is not present elsewhere in the viral genome, and said restriction site could be rescued into an infectious virus as illustrated in figure 15.

It will further be recognized, based on the present disclosure, that the combination of Cre-lox with the two plasmid system will have widest application because of its simplicity:

only readily prepared plasmid DNA is required, no restriction enzyme digestions are required, no possible background of parental viruses has to be contended with, and the system is more than adequately efficient for most purposes. Nonetheless, when enhanced levels of infectivity are required, utilization of the methods disclosed herein for use of viral
5 DNA incorporating bound terminal protein may also benefit through combination with the site-specific recombination techniques taught herein.

EXAMPLE 11

USE OF HEAD-TO-HEAD ITR JUNCTIONS TO ENHANCE THE EFFICIENCY OF
10 RECOMBINATION BY HOMOLOGOUS RECOMBINATION OR SITE-SPECIFIC
RECOMBINATION

As noted above in this invention disclosure, the efficiency of rescue of genes into Ad recombinant vectors can be markedly enhanced by engineering the plasmids so that
15 recombination is mediated by Cre recombinase rather than by homologous recombination. Construction of Ad vectors by Cre-mediated recombination between two plasmids cotransfected into 293Cre4 cells is highly efficient. Unfortunately, this system requires E1-complementing cell lines expressing Cre, which are currently not as widely available as are the parental 293 cells. This method would be more widely applicable if high
20 efficiency Cre-mediated vector rescue could be achieved using the ubiquitous 293 cells or other E1-complementing cell lines. Therefore, we modified the system by introducing a Cre expression cassette into the shuttle plasmid pCA36loxΔ to generate pCA36loxΔCreR and pCA36loxΔCreT (Fig. 8c). The plasmids were designed so that the Cre cassette is not incorporated into the recombinant vector after recombination owing to its location within

the plasmids, but should permit transient Cre expression following cotransfection thus abrogating the need for a Cre-expressing cell line. The validity of this approach was tested by comparing the vector rescue efficiencies following cotransfection of 293 cells with pBHGloxΔE1,3 and shuttle plasmids with or without the Cre expression cassette. The 5 results of typical experiments are presented in Table 3 and Table 6.

In Table 6 the numbers of plaques generated following cotransfection of 293 cells with pBHGloxΔE1,3 and pCA36 or pCA36lox were similar and are typical of the efficiency of vector rescue by homologous recombination. No plaques were generated with pCA36loxΔ 10 since all Ad sequences downstream of the loxP site have been deleted to virtually preclude vector rescue by homologous recombination. In contrast to pCA36loxΔ, pCA35loxΔCreT was able to mediate vector rescue indicating that Cre-mediated vector rescue could be achieved using 293 cells by including a Cre-expression cassette in the shuttle plasmids. Similar numbers of plaques were generated with pCA36loxΔCreR (Table 3). However, 15 the efficiencies of vector rescue using pCA36loxΔCreT or pCA36loxΔCreR were considerably lower than that obtained using 293Cre4 cells (Table 3) suggesting that constitutive Cre expression from 293Cre4 cells resulted in more efficient Cre-mediated vector rescue than was obtained via transient Cre-expression from the transfected shuttle plasmid.

20

Although we had no direct measure of Cre levels in 293Cre4 cells compared to 293 cells transiently transfected with pCA36loxΔCreR, it was possible that Cre recombinase levels in 293Cre4 cells were higher than levels in transfected 293 cells. Therefore we asked whether it might be possible to increase the efficiency of Cre-mediated vector rescue by

increasing the copy number of the shuttle plasmid. To do this we replaced the single ITR junction in pCA36loxΔCreT with a head-to-head ITR junction to generate pCA35loxΔCreITR (Fig. 8c). The rationale for this modification was based on the observation that an ITR junction can serve as an efficient origin of Ad DNA replication resulting in linearization and, presumably, amplification of plasmid DNA (Graham, 1984 EMBO J. 3:2971). Therefore, following cotransfection of 293 cells with pBHGloxΔE1,3, which also bears an ITR junction as well as encoding all *trans*-acting factors required for Ad DNA replication, pCA35loxCreITR was expected to linearize and replicate, which we anticipated should also result in increased Cre expression (more copies of the expression cassette). The validity of this approach was tested by comparing the vector rescue efficiencies following cotransfection of 293 cells with pBHGloxΔE1,3 plus various shuttle plasmids. The results of a typical experiment are presented in Table 4. The numbers of plaques generated using pCA36lox and pCA36loxΔCreT were consistent with the results presented in Table 6. In contrast to the results with pCA36loxΔCreT, the number of plaques generated with pCA35loxΔCreITR was ~10-fold higher (Table 4) indicating that replacement of the single ITR with an ITR junction resulted in a significant increase in the efficiency of Cre-mediated vector rescue using 293 cells.

The results presented in Table 4 indicated that a shuttle plasmid containing a Cre expression cassette and an ITR junction resulted in very significantly improved rescue efficiency compared to a similar plasmid that had only a single ITR. However, in the absence of direct measurements of Cre protein in transfected cells we could not conclude that this was due to enhanced Cre expression or due to some other mechanism. As a control experiment we constructed a shuttle plasmid without the Cre cassette and

containing an ITR junction for comparison with a similar plasmid having a single ITR (Figure 2a). Virus rescue in this experiment (Table 7) was dependent on homologous rather than Cre-mediated recombination since none of the plasmids used contained lox sites and no Cre was expressed in the cotransfected cells. Surprisingly, the shuttle plasmid with an ITR junction gave about 10 fold higher efficiency of recombinant virus rescue compared to an otherwise identical plasmid with a single ITR. Thus the improved rescue using pCA35loxCreITR compared to pCA36loxΔCreT may be entirely due to the use of an ITR junction rather than to increased levels of Cre. Consequently, recombinant virus rescue using the two plasmid approach is markedly improved (approximately 10 fold greater efficiency) by incorporation of ITR junctions into the shuttle plasmids. This allows either for greater numbers of plaques to be produced or allows for vector rescue to be achieved using lower concentrations of plasmid DNA in the cotransfections or fewer numbers of cells or both.

Expression of Cre can be from the cotransfected cells, eg through use of 293Cre4 cells or the like, or by expression from Cre cassettes cloned in one or the other of the cotransfected plasmids. For example, not meant to be limiting, a Cre cassette can be inserted into the genomic plasmid such as one based on pBHGloxΔE1,3. An example of one method of construction of such plasmids is illustrated in Figure 4c wherein a Cre expression cassette was inserted in either of two orientations into a pBHG10 derivative, pBHGloxΔE1,3, to generate pBHGloxΔE1,3Cre and pBHGloxΔE1,3CreR. Combining use of ITR junctions with the Cre-mediated recombination system of AdVec10 improves the efficiency of recombinant virus production by at least 100 fold over the original two plasmid method (Tables 8-13). For example, the data presented in Table 8 show that cotransfection of 293

cells with the genomic plasmid, pBHGloxΔE1,3, plus the shuttle plasmid pCA36lox did not produce any plaques, in this experiment, because of the low efficiency of rescue by homologous recombination when the shuttle plasmid contains only a single ITR. In contrast addition of an ITR junction resulted in relatively high efficiency of rescue (15 plaques/dish), and cotransfection of 293Cre cells with pCA36lox + pBHGloxΔE1,3 (which allows for rescue by Cre mediated recombination) resulted in 11 plaques/dish. The best efficiencies were obtained by cotransfected 293Cre cells with the shuttle plasmid containing an ITR junction: 113 plaques/dish. That recombination was due to action of Cre can be seen from the results obtained when the shuttles are deleted of Ad sequences rightward of the expression cassette thus preventing homologous recombination. In this case, no plaques were obtained following cotransfection of 293 cells but over a hundred plaques/dish were obtained in 293Cre cells when the plasmid contained an ITR junction. Thus a preferred embodiment of the invention is the combination of site specific recombination with use of shuttle plasmids that contain ITR junctions in addition to lox sites. Nonetheless, those skilled in the art will appreciate that even the simple addition of an ITR junction to the shuttle plasmids used in homologous recombinations results in a marked improvement in rescue efficiency over use of plasmids containing a single ITR. Thus when use of a site specific recombinase might be impractical or undesirable, use of shuttle plasmids with ITR junctions provides a simple and relatively efficient means to construct Ad vectors containing foreign DNA insertions.

The results presented in Tables 9 and 10 demonstrate that Cre recombinase can be provided by the cotransfecting shuttle plasmid, for example pCA35loxΔCreITR, or by the cotransfected host cells, eg. 293Cre cells. In these and several additional experiments,

plaques were isolated, expanded on 293 cells and analyzed for viral DNA structure and for expression of β -galactosidase from the expression cassette cloned in pCA35 and pCA36 and derivative plasmids. Over 60 independent plaque isolates were analyzed in this way and in every case the viral DNA structure was that predicted for recombinant viral vectors
5 generated by recombination between the genomic plasmid DNA and the shuttle plasmid DNA and all recombinant viruses expressed β -galactosidase. Thus the methods described herein provide for accurate and reliable construction of Ad vectors containing and expressing a foreign DNA.

10 The results presented in Tables 11 and 12 indicate that for high efficiency rescue the Cre recombinase can be expressed by the recipient host cells, such as 293Cre4 cells, or by the shuttle plasmid, such as pCA35lox Δ CreITR, or by the genomic plasmid such as pBHGlox Δ E1,3Cre or by a combination of these. It will be seen by those skilled in the art that the result of recombination between said plasmids is a virus that does not contain the
15 Cre expression cassette. The results also provide further evidence for the importance of providing an ITR junction on the shuttle plasmid whether rescue is via homologous recombination or via site specific recombination.

Thus, as is amply illustrated by the results of numerous cotransfection experiments
20 presented in Tables 8-13, the Cre recombinase may be expressed from either of the cotransfecting plasmids or from the host cells, such as 293Cre4 cells. The efficiency of rescue of recombinant viruses can be remarkably high, in some experiments, such as those illustrated by Tables 9 and 10, resulting in too many plaques to be countable. Although a Cre cassette may be in either the genomic plasmid or in the shuttle plasmid, if Cre

expression is provided by the cotransfected plasmid DNA rather than from the transfected host cells, it is a preferred embodiment of the invention that the Cre cassette be present in the genomic plasmid for two reasons: firstly, the shuttle plasmids may then be as small as possible with as many cloning sites as possible for ease of insertion of foreign DNAs, and 5 secondly, the results illustrated in Tables 11-13 suggest that the efficiency of rescue is greater for those transfections of 293 cells in which Cre recombinase is provided by the genomic plasmid, specifically the plasmid pBHGloxΔE1,3Cre.

Those skilled in the art will appreciate that many different shuttle plasmids can be 10 constructed and used to generate recombinant viral vectors by the methods outlined above.

As an example, not meant to be limiting, the series of shuttle plasmids illustrated in Figures 5a, 5b and 5d were constructed from readily available plasmids using methods commonly employed by those skilled in the art. Among the shuttle plasmids constructed are plasmids such as pΔE1Sp1AloxITR(MCS) and pΔE1Sp1BloxAloxITR(MCS) (Figure. 5a) 15 that have ITR junctions, polycloning sites (MCS), lox sites and Ad sequences for homologous recombination. Said plasmids can be used for virus rescue by either homologous or site specific recombination by the methods outlined above. Other useful plasmids are pDC111-114 (Figure 5b) also having ITR junctions, polycloning sites, lox sites, or having ITR junctions and Ad sequences for homologous recombination (pDC113 20 and pDC114) if Cre mediated recombination is not required or not desirable. Figure 5d and Figure 6 illustrate the construction of several shuttle plasmids that have a promoter (the murine cytomegalovirus immediate early gene promoter, MCMV), a polycloning region, and polyadenylation signal (SV40) for insertion and expression of cDNAs in Ad vectors. These plasmids provide for considerable versatility in vector isolation. For

example, pDC115 and pDC116 (Figure 5d), having lox sites but no Ad sequences rightward of the lox sites, can be used for virus rescue by cotransfection of cells in the presence of Cre recombinase. Plasmids pDC117 and 118 on the other hand, having no lox sites but having Ad sequences for homologous recombination, can be used for recombinant 5 virus isolation in the absence of Cre recombinase, and the efficiency of rescue is high due to the presence of ITR junctions.

The use of shuttle plasmids with ITR junctions and the use of Cre mediated site specific recombination and the combination of these two improvements significantly increase the 10 efficiency and reliability of the two plasmid system for Ad vector construction. These new methods will permit the production of expression vector libraries comprising large numbers of recombinant adenovirus vectors capable of expressing different cDNAs for analysis of protein function in mammalian cells and in animals. Vectors produced by the methods disclosed herein can also find use as recombinant viral vaccines and in gene 15 therapy.

The enhanced efficiency of recombinant virus isolation using shuttle plasmids containing ITR junctions is not limited to production of vectors with insertions or substitutions or mutations in the E1 region. One skilled in the art will recognize that the ease and 20 efficiency of engineering alterations into other regions of the virus genome would be similarly enhanced by introduction of ITR junctions in place of single ITRs in plasmids containing Ad sequences from the right end of the genome. For example, not meant to be limiting, in such plasmids as pFG23dX1lox or pFG23dX1LacZlox illustrated in Figures 10 and 11 the single ITR could be readily substituted with ITR junctions to improve the

efficiency of rescue of, for example, fibre mutations or foreign DNA inserts in cotransfected cells by methods such as that diagrammed in Figure 11a. For example, an ITR junction from pBHG10 was introduced into pFG23dX1lox to produce pFG23dX1loxITR. Cotransfection of 293Cre4 cells with pFG173lox and pFG23dX1loxITR resulted in approximately 50-60 plaques per dish, about 5-10 fold higher than is routinely obtained with pFG23dX1lox.

Furthermore, the virus rescues illustrated in Figures 9, 12 and 13 would be similarly increased in efficiency if the second plasmid were engineered to contain ITR junctions such as those illustrated for pFG23dX1lox ITR in Figure 11a.

10

EXAMPLE 12

PRODUCTION OF RECOMBINANT VECTOR USING FLP-FRT RECOMBINATION

15 293 cells and 293 Cre cells transformed with an expression plasmid actively encoding FLP recombinase and demonstrated to express functional FLP have been disclosed in copending Patent application (docket no. AdVec3IB, USSN 09/351,819). As FLP is capable of catalyzing site specific recombination between frt sites (Figure 16A) in a manner analogous to Cre mediated site specific recombination between loxP sites it will
20 be appreciated by those skilled in the art that genomic plasmids and shuttle plasmids carrying frt sites at loci previously occupied by loxP sites can be used in an analogous system as that disclosed in copending application (AdVec10, USSN 09/263,650 and AdVec10IA, USSN 09/415,899) to rescue foreign DNA into Ad vectors by site specific recombination. Accordingly, this invention enables the production of viruses and vectors

generated by FLP-mediated site specific recombination between two cotransfected plasmid DNAs in 293FLP cells. An example of a genomic plasmid derived from pBHG10 (Bett, A. J., Haddara, W., Prevec, L. and Graham, F.L "An efficient and flexible system for construction of adenovirus vectors with insertions or deletions in early regions 1 and 3."

5 Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. US 91: 8802-8806, 1994., available from Microbix Biosystems) that contains an appropriately designed frt site is illustrated in Figure 16B. The minimal frt DNA sequence is a 34bp DNA segment that is readily produced as a synthetic deoxyoligonucleotide that can be inserted into plasmid or viral DNA (see Figure 16A). The genomic plasmid pBHGfrtΔE1,3 was constructed in two stages. First a synthetic 10 oligonucleotide carrying an frt site comprising annealed oligonucleotides AB10352 and AB10353 was inserted into the BglII site of pΔE1SP1A (Bett, A. J., Haddara, W., Prevec, L. and Graham, F.L "An efficient and flexible system for construction of adenovirus vectors with insertions or deletions in early regions 1 and 3." Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. US 91: 8802-8806, 1994., available from Microbix Biosystems) to introduce a frt site 15 immediately 5' of the Ad5 pIX gene. Second, an EcoRV-Bst1107I fragment spanning said frt site and pIX gene was substituted for a Bst1107I fragment in pBHG10. The resulting genomic plasmid, pBHGfrtΔE1,3, like pBHG10, encodes all viral functions necessary for replication but lacks the packaging signal required for viral DNA encapsidation into virions.

20

Generation of infectious virus from pBHGfrtΔE1,3 and like plasmids requires that the packaging signal be reconstituted, by for example, recombination between pBHG plasmids and a second plasmid selected from a series of plasmids that contain the left end of the Ad genome including an ITR and a packaging signal. This constitutes the basis for the "two

plasmid" rescue method for construction of Ad vectors (Bett, A. J., Haddara, W., Prevec, L. and Graham, F.L "An efficient and flexible system for construction of adenovirus vectors with insertions or deletions in early regions 1 and 3." Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. US 91: 8802-8806, 1994). We have shown previously (Ng et al, 1999, 2000) that site specific recombination catalyzed, for example, by Cre recombinase, is more efficient than homologous recombination. We now demonstrate in the following that FLP mediated recombination is likewise highly efficient in generating recombinant viruses from cells cotransfected with a genomic plasmid and a shuttle plasmid both of which contain frt sites.

Figure 17A illustrates the construction of a shuttle plasmid, pCA35ΔfrtITR, made by insertion of a synthetic frt site comprised of oligonucleotides AB19509 and AB19510 between a BglII site and an EheI site in pCA35ITR, a shuttle plasmid containing an expression cassette for the *E. coli* β-galactosidase gene. The resulting plasmid, pCA35ΔfrtITR, comprises an ITR junction, the viral packaging signal, the β-galactosidase expression cassette and an frt site in the same orientation as the frt site in pBHGfrtΔE1,3. FLP mediated recombination between said frt sites, as illustrated in Figure 17B, results in generation of a recombinant adenovirus expression vector containing the transgene, the *E. coli* β-galactosidase gene in this example, inserted in the E1 region of said virus. The results of a typical experiment demonstrating that FLP functions with high efficiency to produce recombinant viral vectors in cotransfected 293FLP cells are illustrated in Table 14.

We have previously demonstrated (Ng et al., 2000; AdVec 10IA, USSN 09/415,899) that in Cre mediated rescue of Ad vectors the recombinase need not be expressed constitutively by the host cells that are cotransfected but can be transiently expressed from an expression

cassette cloned either into the genomic plasmid or into the shuttle plasmid. This system has certain advantages over a system utilizing recombinase expressing host cells since rescue can be performed in any suitable host cell including a host cell that has not previously been engineered to express a recombinase. Thus for certain purposes, insertion of a recombinase gene into one of the cotransfected plasmids is a preferred embodiment of the invention.

Therefore we constructed a FLP expressing genomic plasmid, pBHGfrtΔE1,3FLP, derived from pBHGfrtΔE1,3 as illustrated in Figure 18. First, pBHGfrtΔE1,3 was modified by insertion of a synthetic oligonucleotide containing a SwaI restriction site to generate pBHGfrtΔE1,3poly2. Next, a FLP recombinase expression cassette contained within a HpaI-Sall fragment of pdelE1CMVFLP (obtained from Volker Sandig, Merck Research Laboratories, Inc) was inserted into the SwaI site of pBHGfrtΔE1,3poly2 as illustrated. The final plasmid, pBHGfrtΔE1,3FLP, thus contains a FLP expression cassette that results in transient expression of FLP in cotransfected cells that catalyzes site specific recombination between the frt site in pBHGfrtΔE1,3FLP and a frt site in a cotransfected shuttle plasmid such as pCA35ΔfrtITR to generate an infectious Ad vector identical to that illustrated in Figure 17B. The genomic plasmid, pBHGfrtΔE1,3FLP, is designed such that the FLP expression cassette is not introduced into the final recombinant virus.

Those skilled in the art will appreciate that the foregoing examples are not meant to be limiting. Thus one skilled in the art could readily construct genomic plasmids analogous to any or all of the plasmids previously described as containing loxP sites or Cre expression cassettes wherein said loxP sites and said Cre expression cassettes are substituted with frt sites and FLP expression cassettes, respectively. Thus one skilled in the

art could readily construct genomic plasmids pBHG11frt, pBHGdX1Pfrt and pBHGE3frt by the methods taught in the construction of pBHG11lox, pBHGdX1Plox, pBHGE3lox.

Results of typical experiments in which the efficiencies of Cre-lox mediated or FLP-frt

5 mediated recombination were compared are provided in Table 15. It is apparent from the numbers of plaques obtained that the two systems function with similar high efficiencies.

Thus the two site specific recombinase systems can be used interchangeably for rescue of viral vectors. It will therefore be appreciated by those skilled in the art that where, in copending applications 09/251,955; 08/719,217; 08/486,459; 09/286,874; 09/263,650;

10 09/415,899; 09/250,929; the use of Cre-lox recombination is disclosed for manipulation of the Ad genome, for construction of vectors, for the rescue of fibre mutations or other viral gene modifications, that one could readily substitute FLP for Cre and frt for loxP.

Therefore the present invention is not limited to use of FLP and frt for isolation of first generation Ad vectors with insertions of foreign DNA in the E1 region but can be used for

15 modifications of other regions of the viral genome by methods disclosed in copending applications as noted above. It will be further appreciated that the present invention is not limited to use of the site specific recombinases Cre and FLP but is more generally suitable to employment of any site specific recombinases.

20 To maximize the utility and versatility of the FLP-frt system for isolation of first generation Ad vectors several additional shuttle plasmids were constructed that permit those skilled in the art to employ the invention in efficient and simple production of Ad expression vectors containing foreign DNA. Said shuttle plasmids are small, easily grown and can be readily used for insertion of expression cassettes or cDNAs for rescue into

vectors by the methods disclosed herein. Figure 19 illustrates the construction of plasmids pDC511, 512, 515 and 516 that can be readily utilized by those skilled in the art for insertion of expression cassettes with genes under the control of a variety of promoters (pDC511 and 512) or for insertion of cDNAs to be expressed under control of the MCMV promoter (pDC515 and 516).

Figure 19A. The plasmid pDC511 was constructed by replacing the 2347 bp SalI/PshAI fragment from pDC411 with an oligo bearing an frt site

AB19818:

10 5' TCGACGGATCCGAAGTTCTATTCTTACTAGAGTATAGGAACCTCGACTA 3'
and

AB19819:

5' TAGTCGAAGTTCTATACTCTAGTAAGAATAGGAACCTCGGATCCG 3'). The
plasmid pDC512 was constructed by replacing the 2352 bp BamHI/PshAI fragment from
15 pDC412 with an oligo bearing an frt site

(AB19816: 5' GATCCGAAGTTCTATTCTTACTAGAGTATAGGAACCTCGACTA
3'

and AB19817: 5' TAGTCGAAGTTCTATACTCTAGTAAGAATAGGAACCTCG 3').

20 **Figure 19B.** The plasmid pDC515 was constructed by inserting the 728 bp XbaI/BglII fragment from pMH4 containing the MCMV promoter, polycloning region and SV40 poly A into the XbaI/BamHI sites of pDC512.

Figure 19C. The plasmid pDC516 was constructed by ligating together the 3229 bp XbaI/BamHI fragment from pDC512 with the 568 bp XbaI/SalI fragment from pDC316 and the 160 bp SalI/BglII fragment from pMH4.

5 The examples described in the present invention are not meant to be limiting as it will be appreciated that those skilled in the art can readily construct a variety of similar shuttle plasmids with other promoters and alternate polycloning sites by the methods taught herein.

10 Accordingly, as can be understood from the foregoing disclosure, when implementing hthITR junctions according to this invention, recombination may be via site specific mechanisms, for example Cre-mediated recombination as indicated in Figure 11a, or by FLP-mediated recombination as indicated in Figure 17B, or by homologous recombination if the cotransfected plasmids are constructed so as to have overlapping Ad sequences that
15 can allow for recombination to produce an infectious viral genome.

The above examples are not limiting. Thus one skilled in the art could readily construct shuttle plasmids analogous to any or all of the plasmids previously described as containing loxP sites or Cre expression cassettes wherein said loxP sites and said Cre expression
20 cassettes are substituted with frt sites and FLP expression cassettes, respectively. Similarly, one skilled in the art could readily construct shuttle plasmids pΔE1sp1Af^rt, pΔE1sp1Af^rtΔ, pΔE1sp1Bfrt, pΔE1sp1BfrtΔ, pMH4frt, pMH4frtΔ, pMH4frtΔlink, pCA13frt, pCA13frtΔ, pCA14frt, pCA14frtΔ, pCA36frt, pCA36frtΔ, pCA36frtΔFLPR, pCA36frtΔFLPT, pCA35frt and pCA35frtΔFLPITR by the methods taught in the construction of

pΔE1sp1Alox, pΔE1sp1AloxΔ, pΔE1sp1Blox, pΔE1sp1BloxΔ, pMH4lox, pMH4loxΔ, pMH4loxΔlink, pCA13lox, pCA13loxΔ, pCA14lox, pCA14loxΔ, pCA36lox, pCA36loxΔ, pCA36loxΔCreR, pCA36loxΔCreT, pCA35lox and pCA35loxΔCreITR respectively.

- 5 Those skilled in the art will also appreciate that similar manipulations to those described above may be carried out on any particular portion of the adenoviral genome that does not result in disruption of key functions. Thus, for example, on the right end of the genome, rescue of fibre mutations, E3 insertions and the like come within the scope of this invention when implemented according to the methodology disclosed and claimed herein.

Table 1. Cotransfections on 293 and 293Cre4 cells for rescue of LacZ vectors (\pm loxP)

Plasmid combo	μ g DNA	Plaques/dish (293 cells)	(Totals)	Plaques/dish (293Cre4 cells)	(Totals)
pCA36:pBHG10	5:5	0, 0, 0, 0		0, 1, 2, 0	
	5:10	0, 0, 0, 1		1, 0, 0, 0	
	10:10	2, 0, 1, 1		1, 2, 0, 0	
			(5)		(7)
pCA36:pBHGloxΔE1,3	5:5	0, 0, 0, 1		0, 0, 0, 0	
	5:10	0, 0, 0, 1		0, 0, 0, 0	
	10:10	0, 0, 2, 1		0, 0, 0, 0	
			(5)		(0)
pCA36lox:pBHG10	5:5	1, 3, 1, 0		0, 1, 0, 1	
	5:10	0, 1, 0, 0		0, 0, 1, 2	
	10:10	0, 0, 0, 0		0, 1, 1, 0	
			(6)		(7)
pCA36lox:pBHGloxΔE1,3	5:5	1, 0, 0, 1		15, 14, 20, 20	
	5:10	0, 0, 0, 0		11, 15, 12, 16	
	10:10	0, 0, 1, 1		18, 9, 10, 8	
			(4)		(168)

**Table 2. Cotransfections on 293 and 293Cre4 cells for rescue of LacZ Vectors
(\pm loxP)**

Plasmid combo	μ g DNA	Plaques/dish (293 cells)	(Totals)	Plaques/dish (293Cre4 cells)	(Totals)
pCA36:pBHGloxΔE1,3	5:5	1, 1, 2, 6, 2, 3		1, 1, 2, 1, 2, 3	
			(15)		(10)
pCA36lox:pBHGloxΔE1,3	5:5	1, 2, 2, 2, 2, 1		41,44,41,41,44,31	
			(10)		(242)
pCA36loxΔ:pBHGloxΔE1,3	5:5	0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0		41,36,55,34,24,40	
			(0)		(230)
FG140	1	72, 72		150, 115	

Table 3 Efficiency of Ad vector rescue by cotransfection with pBHGloxΔE1,3 and various shuttle plasmids^a

Cell line	Shuttle plasmid	Plaques/dish	Average/dish
293	pCA36lox	6, 2, 3, 3, 5	3.8
	pCA36loxΔ	1, 4, 0, 0, 0	1.0
	pCA36loxΔCreR	2, 2, 4, 3, 2	2.6
	pCA36loxΔCreT	9, 4, 4, 7, 3	5.4
293Cre4	pCA36loxΔ	23, 28, 22, 28	25.3

^a 5μg of all plasmids were used in cotransfections.

Table 4. Efficiency of Ad vector rescue by cotransfection of 293 cells with pBHGloxΔE1,3 and shuttle plasmids encoding Cre^a.

Cell line	Shuttle plasmid	Plaques/dish	Average/dish
293	pCA36lox	2, 3, 1, 0, 1	1.4
	pCA36loxΔ	1, 0, 0, 0, 0	0.2
	pCA36loxΔCreT ^b	3, 1, 5, 2, 4	3.0
	pCA35loxΔCreITR ^b	21, 20, 42, 34, 40	31.4

^aAll cotransfections performed with 5 µg of the indicated shuttle plasmid and 5µg of pBHGloxΔE1,3

^bPlasmids illustrated in figure 8c.

Table 5. Efficiency of rescue of fibre and E4 genes into Ad by cotransfection with pFG173lox and pFG23lox^a

Plasmids	μg DNA	Number of plaques (average/dish)	
		293 cells	293Cre4 cells
pFG173lox ^b : pFG23dX1lox ^c	5:5	0, 0, 0, 0 (0)	33, 27, 39, 26 (31)
	2:2	0, 0, 0, 0 (0)	9, 15, 10, 9 (11)
pFG173 : pFG23dX1	5:5	0, 0, 0, 0 (0)	0, 0, 1 (0.3)
pFG140	1	95	93

^aCotransfections as diagrammed in figure 9^bDiagrammed in figure 9b^cDiagrammed in figure 10

Table 6. Recombinant virus rescue following cotransfection of 293 cells with shuttle plasmids with or without a Cre expression cassette

Plasmid	Number of plaques/dish (average/dish)
pCA36	1, 0, 0, 0 (0.3)
pCA36lox	1, 1, 1, 0 (0.8)
pCA36loxΔ	0, 0, 0, 0
pCA36loxΔCreT	2, 1, 2, 2 (1.8)
pFG140	40, 31 (35.5)

293 cells were cotransfected with 5 µg of pBHGloxΔE1,3 and 5 µg of the indicated shuttle plasmid or 1 µg of pFG140

Table 7. Efficiency of Ad vector rescue by cotransfection of 293 cells with pBHG10 and shuttle plasmids with a single ITR or an ITR junction

Plasmid	μg of DNA/60 mm	# of Plaques	Average
pCA35:pBHG10	2:2	2, 0, 0, 1, 0, 2	0.83
	5:5	2, 2, 2, 1	1.75
pCA35ITR:pBHG10	2:2	19, 11, 14, 12	14
	5:5	23, 23, 14, 17	19.25
pFG140	1	96, 106	101

Table 8. Cotransfections on 293 and 293Cre4 cells for rescue of LacZ vectors (\pm lox, \pm ITR junction, \pm CRE)

Shuttle Plasmid ^a	Plaques/dish (293 cells)	(Average)	Plaques/dish (293Cre4 cells)	(Average)
pCA36lox	0, 0, 0, 0	(0)	13, 15, 3, 13	(11)
pCA35loxITR	8, 13, 21, 19	(15)	111, 131, 100, 130	(113)
pCA36loxΔ	0, 0, 0, 0	(0)	10, 8, 9, 12	(10)
pCA35loxΔITR	0, 0, 0, 0	(0)	91, 127, 141, 118	(119)
pFG140 ^b	75		83	

^a All cotransfections 5 μ g shuttle plasmid + 5 μ g pBHGlox Δ E1,3

^b 1 μ g/dish

Table 9. Cotransfections on 293 and 293Cre4 cells for rescue of LacZ vectors (\pm lox, \pm ITR junction, \pm CRE)

Plasmids	μ g DNA /dish	Number of plaques /dish (average/dish)	
		293 cells	293Cre4 cells
pCA36:pBHGlox Δ E1,3	5:5	ND	0,3 (1.5)
pCA36lox:pBHGlox Δ E1,3	2:2	ND	9,3 (6)
	5:5	2,0,0,0 (0.5)	30,31,30,30 (30.25)
pCA35lox Δ CreITR:pBHGlox Δ E1,3	2:2	ND	71,60,56,79 (66.5)*
	5:5	36	100,96 (98)
pCA35lox Δ ITR:pBHGlox Δ E1,3	2:2	ND	55,64,75,63 (64.25)*
	5:5	0	120,113 (116.5)
pCA35loxITR:pBHGlox Δ E1,3	2:2	ND	53,54,61,66 (58.5)*
	5:5	ND	130,126 (128)
pFG140 (DC)	1	92	178
pFG140 (CE)	1	94	118

* 5 plaques picked from each of these cotransfections and analyzed. All + for β -gal and all had predicted viral DNA structure

Table 10. Cotransfections on 293 and 293Cre4 cells for rescue of LacZ vectors (\pm lox, \pm ITR junction, \pm CRE)

Plasmids*	ugDNA/dish	Number of plaques/dish (average/dish)	
		293 cells (average)	293 Cre4 cells (average)
pCA36	5	1,0,0,0 (0.3)	1,0,0,0 (0.3)
pCA36lox	5	1,1,1,0 (0.8)	10,18,6,7 (10.3)
pCA36lox Δ	5	0,0,0,0	6,4,3,0 (3.25)
pCA36lox Δ CreT	5	2,1,2,2 (1.8)	4,4,2, (3.3)
pCA35lox Δ CreITR	5	14,23,25,23 (21.3)	116,79,83,100 (94.5)
pCA35lox Δ ITR	5	0,0,0,0 (0)	65,62,64,51 (60.5)
pCA35loxITR	5	4,3,4,0 (2.8)	114,101,75,79 (92.25)
pFG140 (DC)	1	40,31 (35.5)	106,92 (99)
pFG140 (CE)	1	21,19 (20)	44,42 (43)

*cotransfections with 5 μ g pBHGlox Δ E1,3 except for pFG140

Table 11. Cotransfections on 293 and 293Cre4 cells for rescue of LacZ vectors (\pm lox, \pm ITR junction, \pm CRE)

Genomic plasmid ^a	Shuttle plasmid ^a	Number of plaques/dish (average/dish)	
		293 cells	293Cre4 cells
pBHGloxΔE1,3	pCA36	2,3,1,2 (2)	3,3,3,1 (2.5)
	pCA36loxΔ	0,0,0,0 (0)	9,23,20,19 (17.8)
	pCA35loxITR	26,27,15,12 (20)	91,101,95,86 (93)
	pCA35loxΔCreITR	56,42,50,74 (55.5)	94,90,96,92 (93)
pBHGloxΔE1,3Cre	pCA36	1,1,0,0 (0.5)	2,3,2,0 (1.8)
	pCA36loxΔ	6,5,4,3 (4.5)	20,14,28,24 (21.5)
	pCA35loxITR	77,67,78,76 (74.5)	125,120,130,135 (128)
	pCA35loxΔCreITR	40,46,47,34 (41.8)	83,90,88,89 (87.5)
pBHGloxΔE1,3CreR	pCA36	0,0 (0)	ND ^b
	pCA36loxΔ	2,0 (1)	ND
	pCA35loxITR	39,29 (34)	ND
	pCA35loxΔCreITR	7,6 (6.6)	ND
pFG140		61,52 (56.5)	85,87 (86)

^a Cotransfections with 5 μ g each plasmid/dish except 1 μ g/dish for pFG140

^b Not done

Table 12. Cotransfections on 293 and 293Cre4 cells for rescue of LacZ vectors (\pm lox, \pm ITR junction, \pm CRE)

Genomic plasmid	Shuttle plasmid	ug DNA /dish	Plaques / dish (average / dish)	
			293 cells	293Cre4 cells
pBHGloxΔE1,3	pCA36	5:5	2,2,1,0 (1.25)	2,1,1,1 (1.3)
	pCA36loxΔ	5:5	2,0,0,0 (0.5)	26,28,25,27 (26.5)
	pCA35loxITR	2:2 5:5	ND ^a 3,9,6,6 (6)	75,90 (82.5) TNTC ^b
	pCA35loxΔITR	2:2 5:5	ND 1,2,1,0 (1)	55,64 (59.5) TNTC
	pCA35loxΔCreITR	2:2 5:5	ND 33,28,35,31 (31.8)	61,64 (62.5) TNTC
pBHGloxΔE1,3 Cre	pCA36	5:5	2,2,1,0 (1.25)	4,1,1,0 (1.5)
	pCA36loxΔ	5:5	6,4,4,6 (5)	21,25,21,17 (21)
	pCA35loxITR	2:2 5:5	ND 57,49,45,54(51.3)	90,96 (93) TNTC
	pCA35loxΔITR	2:2 5:5	ND 39,45,39,46 (42.3)	75,87 (81) TNTC
	pCA35loxΔCreITR	2:2 5:5	ND 54,64,41,40(49.8)	117,103 (110) TNTC
pFG140		1	114,96 (105)	125,140 (132.5)

^a Not done^b Too numerous to count

Table 13. Cotransfections on 293 and 293Cre4 cells for rescue of LacZ vectors (CRE expressed from plasmids, by 293 cells, or both)

Genomic plasmid	Shuttle plasmid	μgDNA/dish	Plaques/dish (average/dish)	
			293 cells	293Cre4 cells
pBHGloxΔE1,3	pCA35loxITR	5:5 2:2	3, 6, 9, 13 (8) 6, 4, 1, 3 (4)	TNTC ^a (≥ 109) 65, 55, 64, 69 (63)
	pCA35loxΔITR	5:5 2:2	0, 0 (0) 1, 0 (0.5)	TNTC (≥ 117) 49, 57, 47, 54 (52)
	pCA35loxΔCreITR	5:5 2:2	18, 21, 43 (27) 18, 12, 21, 24 (19)	TNTC (≥ 111) 74, 61, 50, 49 (59)
pBHGloxΔE1,3Cre	pCA35loxITR	5:5 2:2	52, 66, 63, 57 (60) 48, 47, 32, 43 (43)	TNTC (≥ 116) 72, 85, 69, 75 (72)
	pCA35loxΔITR	5:5 2:2	40, 36, 32, 63 (43) 48, 43, 52, 46 (47)	TNTC (≥ 122) 93, 104, 106, 100 (101)
	pCA35loxΔCreITR	5:5 2:2	54, 56, 51 (54) 33, 37, 35, 19 (31)	TNTC (≥ 68) 110, 94, 89, 83 (94)
pFG140		1	114	150

^a Too numerous to count

TABLE 14: Cotransfections on 293, 293Cre or 293FLP cells for rescue of LacZ

Plasmids	μ g DNA /dish	Number of plaques /dish (average/dish)		
		293 cells	293Cre cells	293FLP cells
pCA35fTR:pBHG10	0.5:0.5	3, 2, 4, 2 (2.8)	ND	ND
	2:2	20, 17, 13, 10 (15)	ND	ND
pCA36lox:pBHGfrt Δ E1,3	0.5:0.5	4, 6, 4, 7 (5)	ND	ND
	2:2	24, 18, 11, 22 (19)	ND	ND
pCA35ftr Δ fTR:pBHGftr Δ E1,3	0.5:0.5	ND	60, 84, 83, 106 (83)	ND
	2:2	ND	>150	ND
pCA35ftr Δ fTR:pBHGftr Δ E1,3	0.5:0.5	ND	ND	37, 41, 48, 52 (45)*
	2:2	ND	ND	60, 68, 52, 49 (57)
pFG140	0.5	95	ND	ND

* 6 plaques picked from these cotransfections and analyzed. All + for β -gal and all had predicted viral DNA structure

TABLE 15 . Vector rescue efficiency by Cre versus FLP-mediated recombination using genomic plasmids expressing recombinases^a.

Shuttle plasmid	Ad genomic plasmid	Plaques/dish (Average/dish)	
		Experiment 1	Experiment 2
pCA35loxΔITR	pBHGloxΔE1,3Cre	59, 45, 45 (50)	52, 57, 31, 42 (45.5)
pCA35frtΔITR	pBHGfrtΔE1,3FLP	45, 41, 44, 45 (44)	39, 40, 31, 44 (38.5)

^a 60 mm dishes of 293 cells were cotransfected with 2 µg of each plasmid and plaques were counted 10 days post-cotransfection.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

- 1 1. A method for making an infectious adenovirus which comprises contacting a cell
2 with or introducing into a cell:
 - 3 (a) a first nucleic acid sequence encoding adenovirus sequences which, in the
4 absence of intermolecular recombination, are insufficient to encode an
5 infectious, replicable or packageable adenovirus; and
 - 6 (b) a second nucleic acid sequence encoding adenovirus sequences which, in
7 the absence of adenoviral replication factors provided in trans or
8 intermolecular recombination with said first nucleic acid sequence, are
9 insufficient to encode an infectious, replicable or packageable adenovirus;
10 provided that (i) said first and said second nucleic acid sequences each comprise a
11 head-to-head ITR junction; (ii) said first nucleic acid and said second nucleic acid
12 each comprise recombinase recognition sites and wherein said first and said second
13 nucleic acids are contacted with a recombinase which recognizes said recombinase
14 recognition sites; or (iii) said first and said second nucleic acid sequences each
15 comprise a head-to-head ITR junction and said first nucleic acid and said second
16 nucleic acid comprise recombinase recognition sites and wherein said first and said
17 second nucleic acids are contacted with a recombinase which recognizes said
18 recombinase recognition sites; whereby said first and said second nucleic acids
19 recombine to form said infectious adenovirus.
- 1 2. The method according to claim 1 wherein said first nucleic acid sequence is a
2 plasmid containing a circularized adenovirus DNA molecule encoding adenovirus

3 sequences which, in the absence of intermolecular recombination, are insufficient
4 to encode an infectious, replicable or packageable adenovirus.

1 3. The method according to claim 2 wherein said plasmid includes a bacterial origin
2 of DNA replication, an antibiotic resistance gene for selection in bacteria, a deletion
3 or modification in E1 that renders the adenoviral sequences insufficient to form
4 infectious virus, an expression cassette encoding a site-specific recombinase, and
5 combinations thereof.

1 4. The method according to claim 2 wherein said adenovirus DNA has a deletion of
2 an adenoviral packaging signal, or wherein said packaging signal is flanked on
3 either side by at least one site-specific recombinase recognition site.

1 5. The method according to claim 4 wherein said adenovirus DNA comprises (i) a
2 deletion of, (ii) a modification in, or (iii) sequences flanked with a site-specific
3 recombinase recognition site, of an adenoviral gene selected from the group
4 consisting of adenoviral E1 sequences extending beyond said packaging signal,
5 adenoviral fibre gene sequences, adenoviral E3 gene sequences, adenoviral E4 gene
6 sequences, and combinations thereof.

1 6. The method according to claim 5 wherein said adenovirus DNA has a *lox* site, an
2 *frt* site or both located 5' of a pIX gene.

1 7. The method according to claim 2 wherein said plasmid is selected from the group
2 consisting of pBHGloxΔE1,3, pBHG11lox, pBHGdX1Plox, pBHGE3lox,
3 pFG173lox, pBHGloxΔE1,3Cre.

1 8. The method according to claim 1 wherein said first nucleic acid sequence is a
2 segment of adenoviral DNA comprising covalently linked adenoviral terminal
3 protein TP.

1 9. The method according to claim 8 wherein said first nucleic acid sequence is
2 AdLC8cDNA-TP, or adfloxfibreDNA-TP.

1 10. The method according to claim 1 wherein said second nucleic acid sequence is a
2 plasmid comprising:

3 (i) said head-to-head ITR junction, and a packaging signal contained within the
4 leftmost approximately 350 nt of the adenovirus genome;
5 (ii) a polycloning site or a foreign DNA or an expression cassette; and
6 optionally
7 (iii) a *lox P* or an *frt* site 3' of said polycloning site, foreign DNA, or expression
8 cassette.

1 11. The method according to claim 10 wherein said plasmid is selected from the group
2 consisting of pΔE1sp1Alox, pΔE1sp1AloxΔ, pΔE1sp1Blox, pΔE1sp1BloxA,
3 pMH4lox, pMH4loxΔ, pMH4loxΔlink, pCA13lox, pCA13loxΔ, pCA14lox,
4 pCA14loxΔ, pCA36lox, pCA36loxΔ, pCA36loxΔCreR, pCA36loxΔCreT,

1 pCA35lox, pCA35loxΔCreITR, pDC111, pDC112, pDC113, pDC114, pDC115,
2 pDC116, pDC117, pDC118, combinations thereof and modifications thereof
3 wherein such modifications comprise inclusion of a head-to-head ITR junction.

1 12. A recombinant adenovirus vector system comprising:

2 (a) either (i) a first nucleic acid sequence encoding adenovirus sequences
3 which, in the absence of intermolecular recombination, are insufficient to
4 encode an infectious, replicable or packageable adenovirus, said first
5 nucleic acid sequence comprising at least one site-specific recombinase
6 recognition target site which is recognized by a site-specific recombinase
7 or (ii) a first nucleic acid sequence encoding adenovirus sequences which
8 are sufficient to encode an infectious, replicable or packageable adenovirus
9 covalently linked to adenoviral terminal protein, said first nucleic acid
10 sequence comprising at least one site-specific recombinase recognition
11 target site which is recognized by a site-specific recombinase, wherein
12 contact of said first nucleic acid with said site-specific recombinase results
13 in excision of sequences from said replicable adenovirus such that, in the
14 absence of intermolecular recombination, said infectious, replicable or
15 packageable adenovirus is rendered replication or packaging defective, or
16 (iii) where a head-to-head ITR junction is present in a second nucleic acid
17 sequence, sufficient overlapping adenoviral nucleic acid sequences such that
18 homologous recombination with sequences in said second nucleic acid
19 sequence may occur;

20 (b) a second nucleic acid sequence encoding adenovirus sequences which, in
21 the absence of adenoviral replication factors provided in trans or
22 intermolecular recombination with said first nucleic acid sequence, are
23 insufficient to encode an infectious, replicable or packageable adenovirus,
24 said second nucleic acid sequence comprising (i) at least one head-to-head
25 ITR junction and sufficient adenoviral sequences to permit homologous
26 recombination with said first nucleic acid sequences, (ii) at least one
27 recombinase recognition target site sufficiently identical with said
28 recombinase recognition target site in said first nucleic acid as to be
29 recognized by the same site-specific recombinase which recognizes said
30 site-specific recombinase recognition target site in said first nucleic acid, or
31 (iii) combinations thereof;
32 wherein said first and said second nucleic acid sequences, in combination and
33 following homologous or site-specific intermolecular recombination, result in
34 production of an infectious adenovirus, and wherein a site-specific recombinase
35 which recognizes said site-specific recombinase recognition target sites either (i)
36 is expressed by a cell into which said first and said second nucleic acids are
37 introduced, (ii) is operatively encoded by said first nucleic acid, said second nucleic
38 acid or both, (iii) is provided in trans through expression from a third nucleic acid
39 or is provided in trans as an active protein, or (iv) is absent and recombination
40 occurs through homologous recombination, provided that in this case, the head-to-
41 head ITR junction is present.

13. The recombinant adenovirus vector system of claim 12 comprising:

- (a) a first plasmid selected from the group consisting of pBHGloxΔE1,3, pBHG11lox, pBHGloxΔE1,3Cre, and pBHGloxΔE1,3CreR, containing a circularized adenovirus DNA molecule and optionally including a bacterial origin of DNA replication and an antibiotic resistance gene for selection in bacteria and having a deletion or modification of the packaging signal, of additional E1 sequences, of E3, E4 or fibre, and optionally having a *lox P* site located adjacent the pIX gene, E3, E4 or fibre of the virus, said plasmid optionally encoding Cre, FLP or another site-specific recombinase;
- (b) a second plasmid selected from the group consisting of pΔE1sp1Alox, pΔE1sp1AloxΔ, pΔE1sp1Blox, pΔE1sp1BloxA, pMH4lox, pMH4loxΔ, pMH4loxΔlink, pCA13lox, pCA13loxΔ, pCA14lox, pCA14loxΔ, pCA36lox, pCA36loxΔ, pCA36loxΔCreR, pCA36loxΔCreT, pCA35lox, pCA35loxΔCreITR, pDC111, pDC112, pDC113, pDC114, pDC115, pDC116, pDC117, pDC118, combinations thereof and modifications thereof wherein such modifications comprise inclusion of a head-to-head ITR junction:
 - (i) all or most of the left ITR and the packaging signal contained within the leftmost approximately 350 nt of the Ad genome or a head-to-head ITR junction;
 - (ii) a polycloning site or a foreign DNA or an expression cassette; and optionally,
 - (iii) a *lox P* or *frt* site 3' of said polycloning site or foreign DNA or expression cassette; and

25 (c) a cell line that is normally able to support replication of adenovirus and
26 which optionally expresses the recombinase Cre, FLP or another site
27 specific recombinase that is able to catalyse site-specific recombination
28 between said *lox P* sites, said frt sites, or both.

1 14. The recombinant adenovirus vector system of claim 12 wherein said cell further
2 expresses adenoviral E1.

1 15. The recombinant adenovirus vector system of claim 12 wherein said first plasmid
2 and said second plasmid are cotransfected into said cell to produce an infectious
3 virus vector comprising a left end, a polycloning site, foreign DNA, or an
4 expression cassette derived from said second plasmid, joined to the remaining
5 portion of the viral DNA derived from said first plasmid.

1 16. The recombinant adenovirus vector system of claim 12 wherein said cell is co-
2 transfected with a first DNA, extracted in such a manner as to retain covalently
3 bound adenoviral terminal protein TP, from a virus selected from the group
4 consisting of AdLC8, AdLC8cluc, AdLC8cCE199, comprising a packaging signal
5 flanked by *loxP* sites, and a second DNA comprising a packaging signal wherein
6 said second DNA is selected from the group consisting of pΔE1sp1Alox,
7 pΔE1sp1AloxΔ, pΔE1sp1Blox, pΔE1sp1BloxΔ, pMH4lox, pMH4loxΔ,
8 pMH4loxΔlink, pCA13lox, pCA13loxΔ, pCA14lox, pCA14loxΔ, pCA36lox,
9 pCA36loxΔ, pCA36loxΔCreR, pCA36loxΔCreT, pCA35lox, pCA35loxΔCreITR,
10 pDC111, pDC112, pDC113, pDC114, pDC115, pDC116, pDC117, pDC118,

11 combinations thereof and modifications thereof wherein such modifications
12 comprise inclusion of a head-to-head ITR junction, whereby said *lox P* sites
13 flanking said packaging signal of said first DNA are acted upon by Cre recombinase
14 expressed in said cells to induce excision of said packaging signal, producing a
15 noninfectious virus genome incapable of packaging its DNA into virions unless
16 joined by Cre-mediated recombination to the *lox P* site of said second DNA to
17 reconstitute a packaging signal therein.

1 17. The recombinant adenovirus vector system of claim 16 wherein, prior to said co-
2 transfection, said first DNA is cleaved with a restriction enzyme that cuts between
3 said *loxP* sites.

1 18. A kit for construction of recombinant adenovirus vectors comprising:
2 (a) either (i) a first nucleic acid sequence encoding adenovirus sequences
3 which, in the absence of intermolecular recombination, are insufficient to
4 encode an infectious, replicable or packageable adenovirus, said first
5 nucleic acid sequence comprising at least one site-specific recombinase
6 recognition target site which is recognized by a site-specific recombinase,
7 (ii) a first nucleic acid sequence encoding adenovirus sequences which are
8 sufficient to encode an infectious, replicable or packageable adenovirus
9 covalently linked to adenoviral terminal protein, said first nucleic acid
10 sequence comprising at least one site-specific recombinase recognition
11 target site which is recognized by a site-specific recombinase, wherein
12 contact of said first nucleic acid with said site-specific recombinase results

13 in excision of sequences from said replicable adenovirus such that, in the
14 absence of intermolecular recombination, said infectious, replicable or
15 packageable adenovirus is rendered replication or packaging defective, or
16 (iii) sufficient adenoviral sequences to permit homologous recombination
17 with similar sequences in a second nucleic acid sequence;

18 (b) a second nucleic acid sequence encoding adenovirus sequences which, in
19 the absence of adenoviral replication factors provided in trans or
20 intermolecular recombination with said first nucleic acid sequence, are
21 insufficient to encode an infectious, replicable or packageable adenovirus,
22 said second nucleic acid sequence comprising (i) at least one recombinase
23 recognition target site sufficiently identical with said recombinase
24 recognition target site in said first nucleic acid as to be recognized by the
25 same site-specific recombinase which recognizes said site-specific
26 recombinase recognition target site in said first nucleic acid, (ii) a head-to-
27 head ITR junction and sufficient adenoviral sequences to permit
28 homologous recombination with similar sequences in said first nucleic acid,
29 or (iii) combinations thereof; and

30 (c) a cell wherein, when said component (a) and said component (b) are
31 cotransfected and recombined through homologous recombination or the
32 action of a recombinase which recognizes said recombinase recognition
33 sites, an infectious recombinant adenovirus vector is produced.

1 24. The recombinant adenovirus vector system according to claim 12 wherein said first
2 nucleic acid sequence comprises a recombinase recognition site and a deletion in
3 the adenoviral fibre gene.

1 25. The recombinant adenovirus vector system of claim 12 comprising:
2 (a) a first adenovirus vector having a fibre gene flanked by loxP, frt sites, or both
3 loxP and frt sites;
4 (b) a plasmid comprising a bacterial origin of replication, a bacterial antibiotic
5 resistance marker, a deletion in the adenoviral fibre gene, a foreign DNA insert, the
6 right end of the Ad genome encompassing the fibre gene, including a single loxP
7 or frt site located to the left of the fibre gene and a foreign DNA insert between the
8 loxP or frt site and the fibre gene, and optionally also comprising a head-to-head
9 ITR junction.

1 26. An adenoviral vector selected from the group consisting of pBHGloxΔE1,3,
2 pBHG11lox, pBHGdX1Plox, pBHGE3lox, pFG173lox, and pBHGloxΔE1,3Cre.

1 27. An adenoviral vector selected from the group consisting of pΔE1sp1Alox,
2 pΔE1sp1AloxΔ, pΔE1sp1Blox, pΔE1sp1BloxAΔ, pMH4lox, pMH4loxΔ,
3 pMH4loxΔlink, pCA13lox, pCA13loxΔ, pCA14lox, pCA14loxΔ, pCA36lox,
4 pCA36loxΔ, pCA36loxΔCreR, pCA36loxΔCreT, pFG23dX1lox, pAB14loxΔ,
5 pAB14flox, pCA35loxΔCreITR, and derivatives thereof comprising at least one
6 head-to-head ITR junction.

- 1 28. A cell comprising the adenoviral vector of claim 26.

1 29. A cell comprising the adenoviral vector of claim 27.

1 30. A cell into which has been introduced a first vector selected from the group
2 consisting of pBHGloxΔE1,3, pBHG11lox, pBHGdX1Plox, pBHGE3lox,
3 pFG173lox, and pBHGloxΔE1,3Cre, and a second vector selected from the group
4 consisting of pΔE1sp1Alox, pΔE1sp1AloxΔ, pΔE1sp1Blox, pΔE1sp1BloxΔ,
5 pMH4lox, pMH4loxΔ, pMH4loxΔlink, pCA13lox, pCA13loxΔ, pCA14lox,
6 pCA14loxΔ, pCA36lox, pCA36loxΔ, pCA36loxΔCreR, pCA36loxΔCreT,
7 pCA35lox, pCA35loxΔCreITR, pDC111, pDC112, pDC113, pDC114, pDC115,
8 pDC116, pDC117, pDC118, combinations thereof and modifications thereof
9 wherein such modifications comprise inclusion of a head-to-head ITR junction.

1 31. A method of vaccinating or administering gene therapy to a recipient in need of
2 such treatment which comprises administering to said recipient an effective amount
3 of an adenovirus produced by site-specific recombination of:
4 (a) either (i) a first nucleic acid sequence encoding adenovirus sequences
5 which, in the absence of intermolecular recombination, are insufficient to
6 encode an infectious, replicable or packageable adenovirus, said first
7 nucleic acid sequence comprising at least one site-specific recombinase
8 recognition target site which is recognized by a site-specific recombinase,
9 (ii) a first nucleic acid sequence encoding adenovirus sequences which are
10 sufficient to encode an infectious, replicable or packageable adenovirus

11 covalently linked to adenoviral terminal protein, said first nucleic acid
12 sequence comprising at least one site-specific recombinase recognition
13 target site which is recognized by a site-specific recombinase, wherein
14 contact of said first nucleic acid with said site-specific recombinase results
15 in excision of sequences from said replicable adenovirus such that, in the
16 absence of intermolecular recombination, said infectious, replicable or
17 packageable adenovirus is rendered replication or packaging defective, or
18 (iii) a first nucleic acid comprising sufficient adenoviral sequences to permit
19 homologous recombination with similar sequences in a second nucleic acid
20 sequence;

21 (b) a second nucleic acid sequence encoding adenovirus sequences which, in
22 the absence of adenoviral replication factors provided in trans or
23 intermolecular recombination with said first nucleic acid sequence, are
24 insufficient to encode an infectious, replicable or packageable adenovirus,
25 said second nucleic acid sequence comprising (i) at least one recombinase
26 recognition target site sufficiently identical with said recombinase
27 recognition target site in said first nucleic acid as to be recognized by the
28 same site-specific recombinase which recognizes said site-specific
29 recombinase recognition target site in said first nucleic acid, (ii) sufficient
30 adenoviral sequences to permit homologous recombination with similar
31 sequences in said first nucleic acids and at least one head-to-head ITR
32 junction, or (iii) combinations thereof;
33 wherein said first and said second nucleic acid sequences, in combination and
34 following site-specific intermolecular recombination, result in production of an

35 infectious adenovirus, and wherein, optionally, where site-specific recombination
36 is to be employed, a site-specific recombinase which recognizes said site-specific
37 recombinase recognition target sites is either (i) expressed by a cell into which said
38 first and said second nucleic acids are introduced, (ii) operatively encoded by said
39 first nucleic acid, said second nucleic acid or both, or (iii) is provided in trans
40 through expression from a third nucleic acid or is provided in trans as an active
41 protein.

1 32. The method according to claim 31 wherein said first nucleic acid is selected from
2 the group consisting of pBHGloxΔE1,3, pBHG11lox, pBHGdX1Plox, pBHGE3lox,
3 pFG173lox, and pBHGloxΔE1,3Cre, and wherein said second nucleic acid is
4 selected from the group consisting of pΔE1sp1Alox, pΔE1sp1AloxΔ,
5 pΔE1sp1Blox, pΔE1sp1BloxA, pMH4lox, pMH4loxΔ, pMH4loxΔlink,
6 pCA13lox, pCA13loxΔ, pCA14lox, pCA14loxΔ, pCA36lox, pCA36loxΔ,
7 pCA36loxΔCreR, pCA36loxΔCreT, pCA35lox, pCA35loxΔCreITR, pDC111,
8 pDC112, pDC113, pDC114, pDC115, pDC116, pDC117, pDC118, combinations
9 thereof and modifications thereof wherein such modifications comprise inclusion
10 of a head-to-head ITR junction.

1 33. A composition comprising the recombination product of a first vector selected from
2 the group consisting of pBHGloxΔE1,3, pBHG11lox, pBHGdX1Plox, pBHGE3lox,
3 pFG173lox, pBHGloxΔE1,3Cre, and a second vector selected from the group
4 consisting of pΔE1sp1Alox, pΔE1sp1AloxΔ, pΔE1sp1Blox, pΔE1sp1BloxA,
5 pMH4lox, pMH4loxΔ, pMH4loxΔlink, pCA13lox, pCA13loxΔ, pCA14lox,

6 pCA14loxΔ, pCA36lox, pCA36loxΔ, pCA36loxΔCreR, pCA36loxΔCreT,
7 pCA35lox, pCA35loxΔCreITR, pDC111, pDC112, pDC113, pDC114, pDC115,
8 pDC116, pDC117, pDC118, combinations thereof and modifications thereof
9 wherein such modifications comprise inclusion of a head-to-head ITR junction,
10 wherein said first vector and said second vector are contacted optionally in the
11 presence of Cre recombinase.

1 34. The composition according to claim 33 wherein said first and said second vectors
2 are contacted inside a cell and said recombination product is harvested from said
3 cell.

1 35. The recombinant adenovirus vector system according to claim 12 comprising:
2 (a) either (i) a first nucleic acid sequence encoding adenovirus sequences
3 which, in the absence of intermolecular recombination, are insufficient to
4 encode an infectious, replicable or packageable adenovirus, said first
5 nucleic acid sequence comprising at least one site-specific recombinase
6 recognition target site which is recognized by a site-specific recombinase
7 or (ii) a first nucleic acid sequence encoding adenovirus sequences which
8 are sufficient to encode an infectious, replicable or packageable adenovirus
9 covalently linked to adenoviral terminal protein, said first nucleic acid
10 sequence comprising (A) at least one restriction enzyme recognition site
11 such that upon restriction of said nucleic acid with a restriction enzyme
12 which recognizes said site, a site-specific recombinase recognition target
13 site remains intact, but said nucleic acid is rendered replication, packaging

14 or infection deficient, or (B) wherein said nucleic acid comprises at least
15 one site-specific recombinase recognition site which is recognized by a site-
16 specific recombinase, wherein contact of said first nucleic acid with said
17 site-specific recombinase results in excision of sequences from said
18 replicable adenovirus such that, in the absence of intermolecular
19 recombination, said infectious, replicable or packageable adenovirus is
20 rendered replication or packaging defective;

21 (b) a second nucleic acid sequence encoding adenovirus sequences which, in
22 the absence of adenoviral replication factors provided in trans or
23 intermolecular recombination with said first nucleic acid sequence, are
24 insufficient to encode an infectious, replicable or packageable adenovirus,
25 said second nucleic acid sequence comprising at least one recombinase
26 recognition target site sufficiently identical with said recombinase
27 recognition target site in said first nucleic acid as to be recognized by the
28 same site-specific recombinase which recognizes said site-specific
29 recombinase recognition target site in said first nucleic acid, and at least one
30 head-to-head ITR junction;
31 wherein said first and said second nucleic acid sequences, in combination and
32 following site-specific intermolecular recombination, result in production of an
33 infectious adenovirus, and wherein a site-specific recombinase which recognizes
34 said site-specific recombinase recognition target sites is either (i) expressed by a
35 cell into which said first and said second nucleic acids are introduced, (ii)
36 operatively encoded by said first nucleic acid, said second nucleic acid or both, or

37 (iii) is provided in trans through expression from a third nucleic acid or is provided
38 in trans as an active protein.

1 36. An improved adenovirus vector system comprising two plasmids, neither of which
2 alone comprises sufficient adenoviral sequences to produce infectious adenovirus
3 when introduced into a cell but which, when both plasmids are introduced into a
4 cell, recombine to form an infectious recombinant adenovirus, the improvement
5 comprising: (a) inclusion of at least one head-to-head ITR junction in at least one
6 of the plasmids, or (b) inclusion, either in said first plasmid, said second plasmid,
7 in both said first and said second plasmids or into a cell into which said first and
8 said second plasmids are introduced, sufficient sequences to encode an active site-
9 specific recombinase, and inclusion in said first and said second plasmid of
10 recombinase recognition sequences, such that upon contact of said first and said
11 second plasmids with said site-specific recombinase, site-specific recombination
12 between said recombinase recognition sequences in said first plasmid and said
13 second plasmid occurs, or (c) combinations of (a) and (b).

1 37. A two-plasmid system for making an infectious adenoviral vector wherein each
2 plasmid alone comprises insufficient adenoviral sequences to encode an infectious
3 adenoviral vector wherein, upon recombination, an infectious adenoviral vector is
4 produced, provided that each plasmid of said two-plasmid system comprises (a) a
5 head-to-head ITR junction; (b) a recombinase recognition site such that upon
6 contact of both plasmids of said two-plasmid system with a site-specific

7 recombinase, site-specific recombination between the plasmids of said two-plasmid
8 system occurs, or (c) wherein said two plasmid system comprises both (a) and (b).

1 38. The recombinant adenovirus vector system of claim 12 comprising:

- 2 (a) a first plasmid selected from the group consisting of pBHGfrtΔE1,3,
3 pBHG11frt, pBHGdX1Pfrt, pBHGE3frt and, pBHGfrtΔE1,3FLP containing
4 a circularized adenovirus DNA molecule and optionally including a
5 bacterial origin of DNA replication and an antibiotic resistance gene for
6 selection in bacteria and having a deletion or modification of the packaging
7 signal, of additional E1 sequences, of E3, E4 or fibre, and optionally having
8 a *frt* site located adjacent the pIX gene, E3, E4 or fibre of the virus, said
9 plasmid optionally encoding Cre, FLP or another site-specific recombinase;
- 10 (b) a second plasmid selected from the group consisting of pCA35ΔfrtITR,
11 pDC511, pDC512, pDC515, pDC516 and combinations thereof and
12 modifications thereof wherein such modifications comprise inclusion of a
13 head-to-head ITR junction:
14 (i) all or most of the left ITR and the packaging signal contained within
15 the leftmost approximately 350 nt of the Ad genome or a head-to-
16 head ITR junction;
17 (ii) a polycloning site or a foreign DNA or an expression cassette; and
18 optionally,
19 (iii) a *lox* P or *frt* site 3' of said polycloning site or foreign DNA or
20 expression cassette; and

21 (c) a cell line that is normally able to support replication of adenovirus and
22 which optionally expresses the recombinase Cre, FLP or another site
23 specific recombinase that is able to catalyse site-specific recombination
24 between said *lox P* sites, said frt sites, or both.

1 38. The kit according to claim 18 wherein component (a) is selected from the group
2 consisting of pBHGfrtΔE1,3, pBHG11frt, pBHGdX1Pfrt, pBHGE3frt and,
3 pBHGfrtΔE1,3FLP.

1 39. The kit according to claim 18 wherein said component (b) is selected from the
2 group consisting of pCA35ΔfrtITR, pDC511, pDC512, pDC515 and pDC516,
3 combinations thereof and modifications thereof wherein such modifications
4 comprise inclusion of a head-to-head ITR junction.

1 40. The kit according to claim 18 wherein said cell of (c) is selected from the group
2 consisting of 293 cells, 293 cells expressing FLP, PER-C6 cells expressing FLP,
3 911 cells expressing FLP, and wherein said recombinase recognition sites are frt
4 sites.

1 41. A method for recombining DNA comprising combining use of Cre-lox with FLP-
2 frt.

1 42. The method according to claim 41 wherein said FLP-frt system is employed to
2 rescue cassettes comprising molecular switches regulated by Cre-lox, or vice versa.

1 43. The method according to claim 41 wherein said FLP-frt system is employed to
2 rescue a Cre expression cassette, or vice versa.

1 44. A nucleic acid construct selected from the group consisting of:
2 pBHG11frt, pBHGdX1Pfrt and pBHGE3frt by the methods taught in the
3 construction of pBHG11lox, pBHGdX1Plox, pBHGE3lox, pΔE1sp1Afrt,
4 pΔE1sp1AfrtΔ, pΔE1sp1Bfrt, pΔE1sp1BfrtΔ, pMH4frt, pMH4frtΔ, pMH4frtΔlink,
5 pCA13frt, pCA13frtΔ, pCA14frt, pCA14frtΔ, pCA36frt, pCA36frtΔ,
6 pCA36frtΔFLPR, pCA36frtΔFLPT, pCA35frt and pCA35frtΔFLPITR.

Cotransfection of 293Cre cells with pBHGloxΔE1,3 and a "Lox" shuttle plasmid for generation of Ad expression vectors

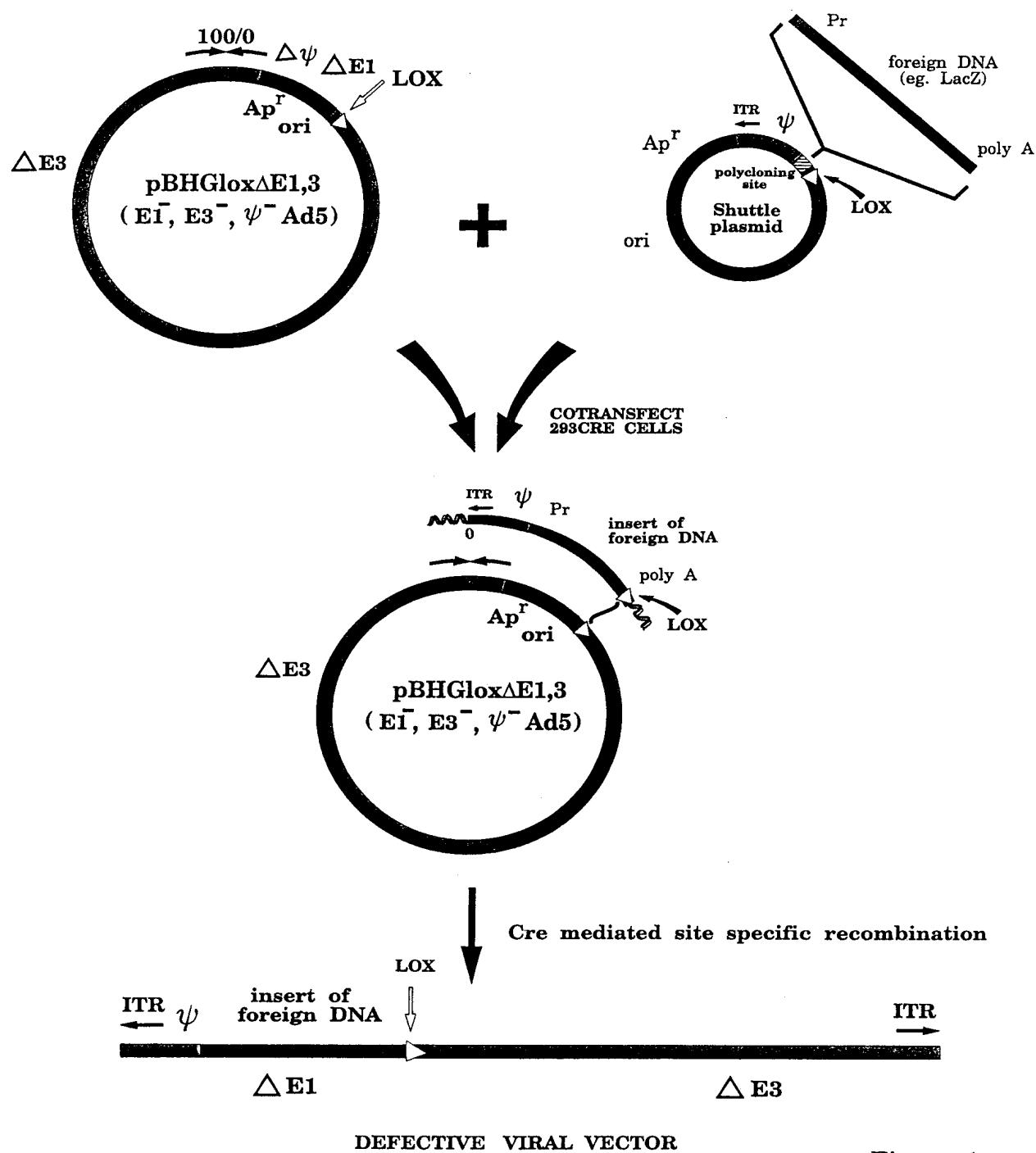
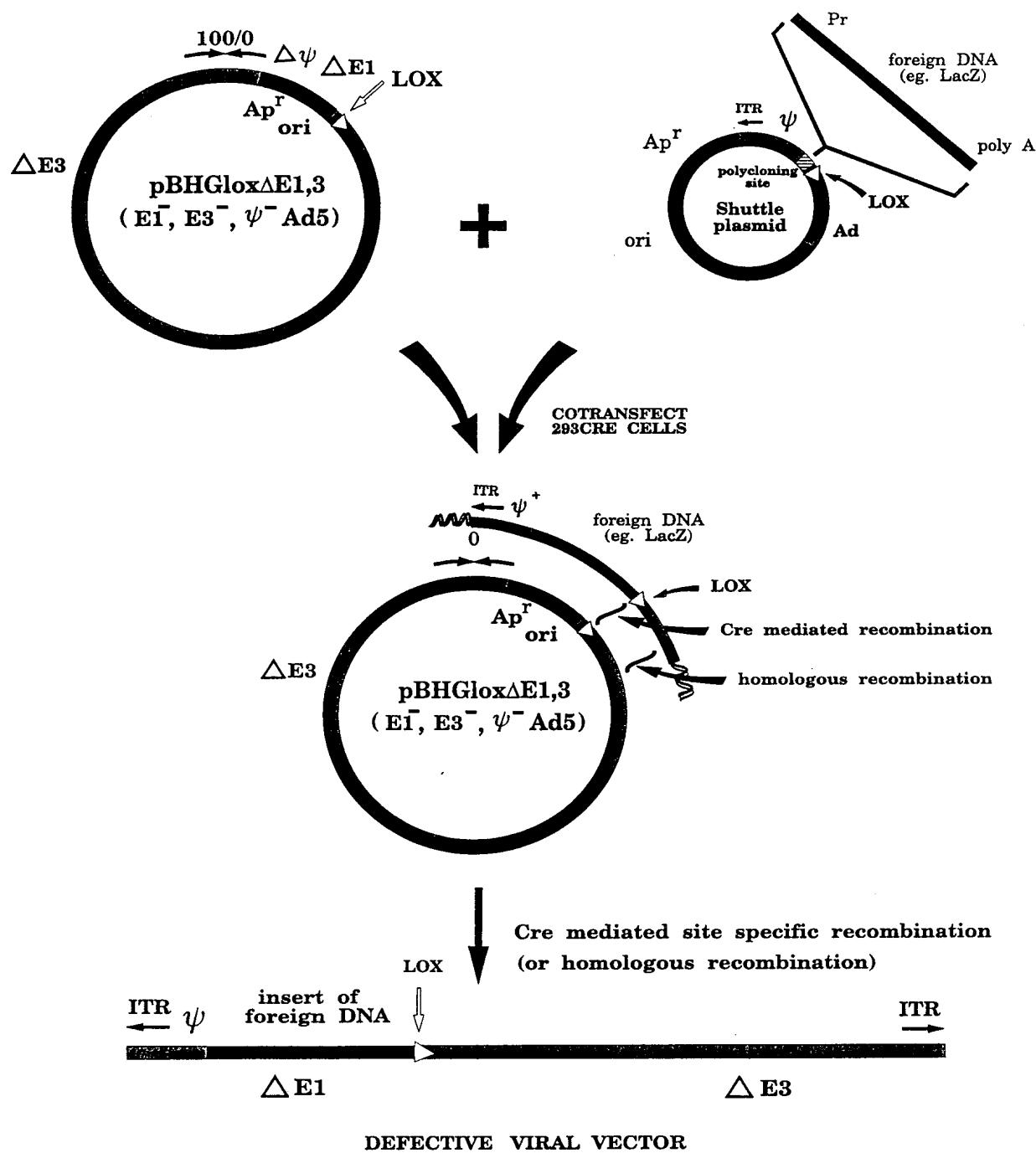


Figure 1

Cotransfection of 293Cre cells with pBHGloxΔE1,3 and a "lox" shuttle plasmid for generation of Ad expression vectors

**Figure 2**

CONSTRUCTION OF VARIOUS SHUTTLE PLASMIDS

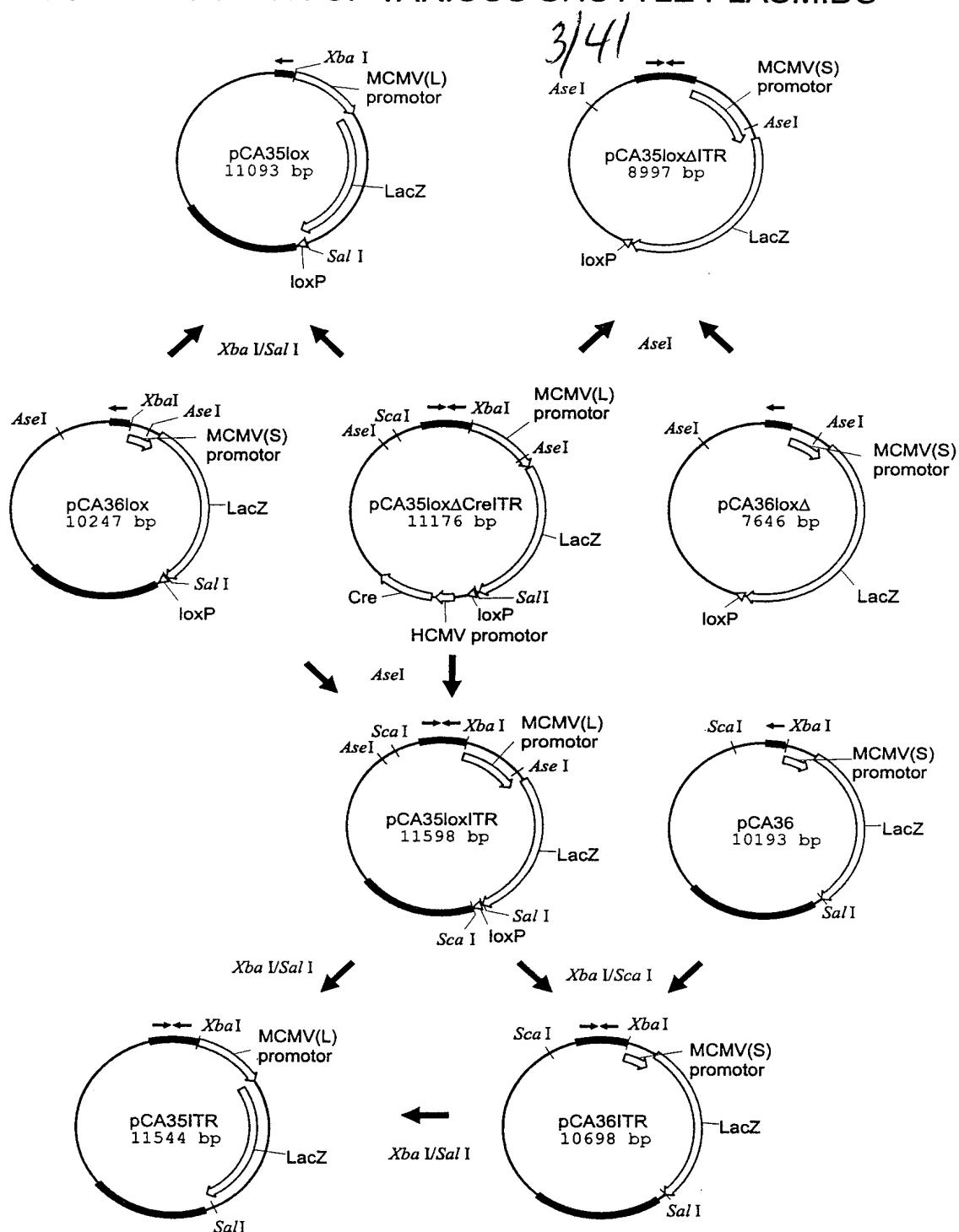
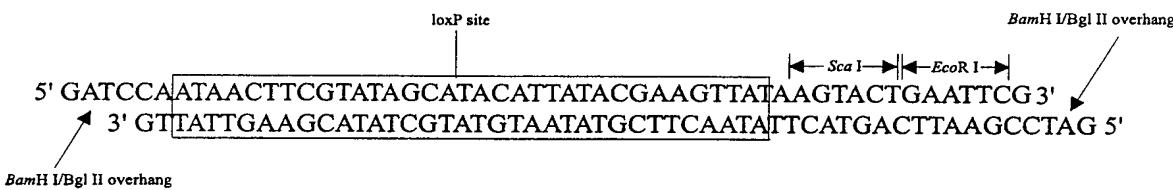


Figure 2a

OLIGONUCLEOTIDES USED IN CLONING

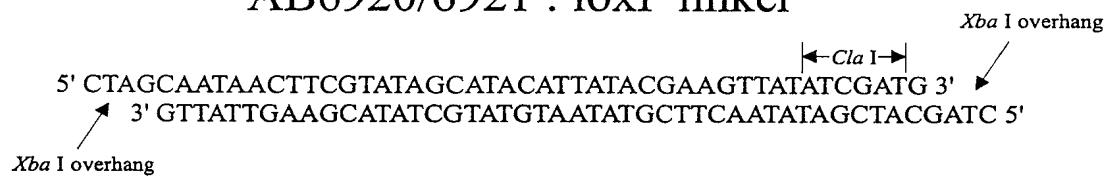
AB3233/3234 : loxP linker



AB14626/14627 : Multiple Cloning Site



AB6920/6921 : loxP linker



AB14680/14681 : loxP linker

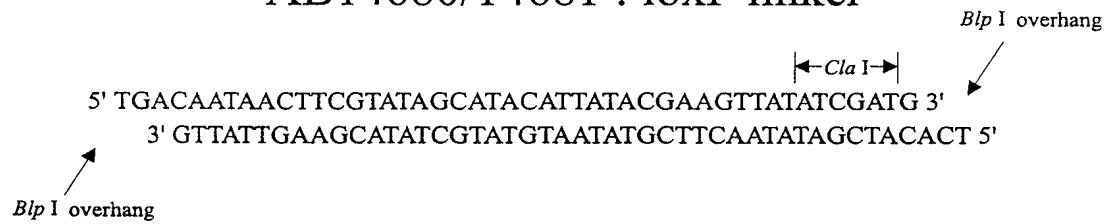
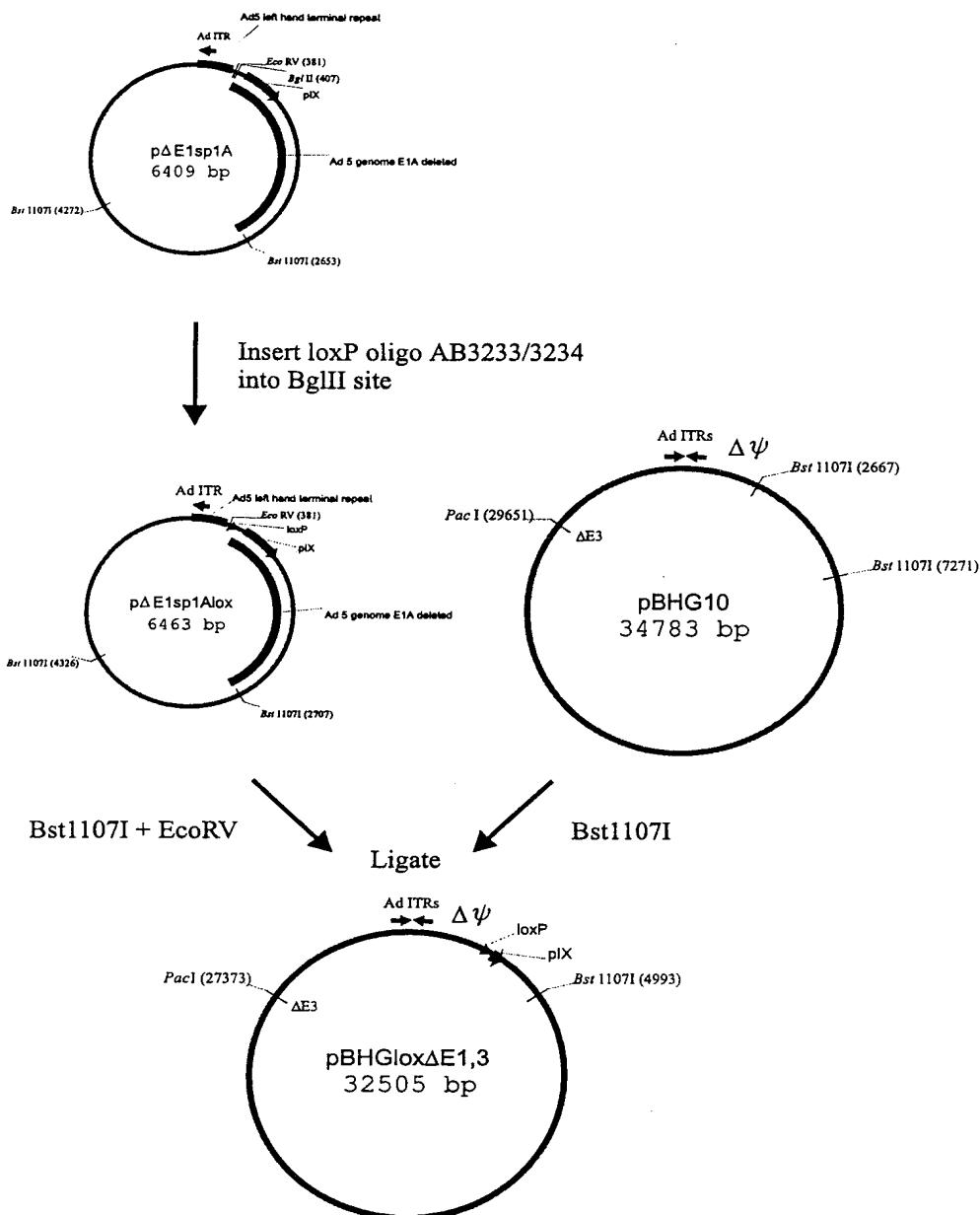


Figure 3

**CONSTRUCTION OF A CIRCULAR GENOMIC PLASMID
FOR Ad VECTOR RESCUE USING THE Cre/ loxP SYSTEM**



CONSTRUCTION OF pBHGdX1Plox

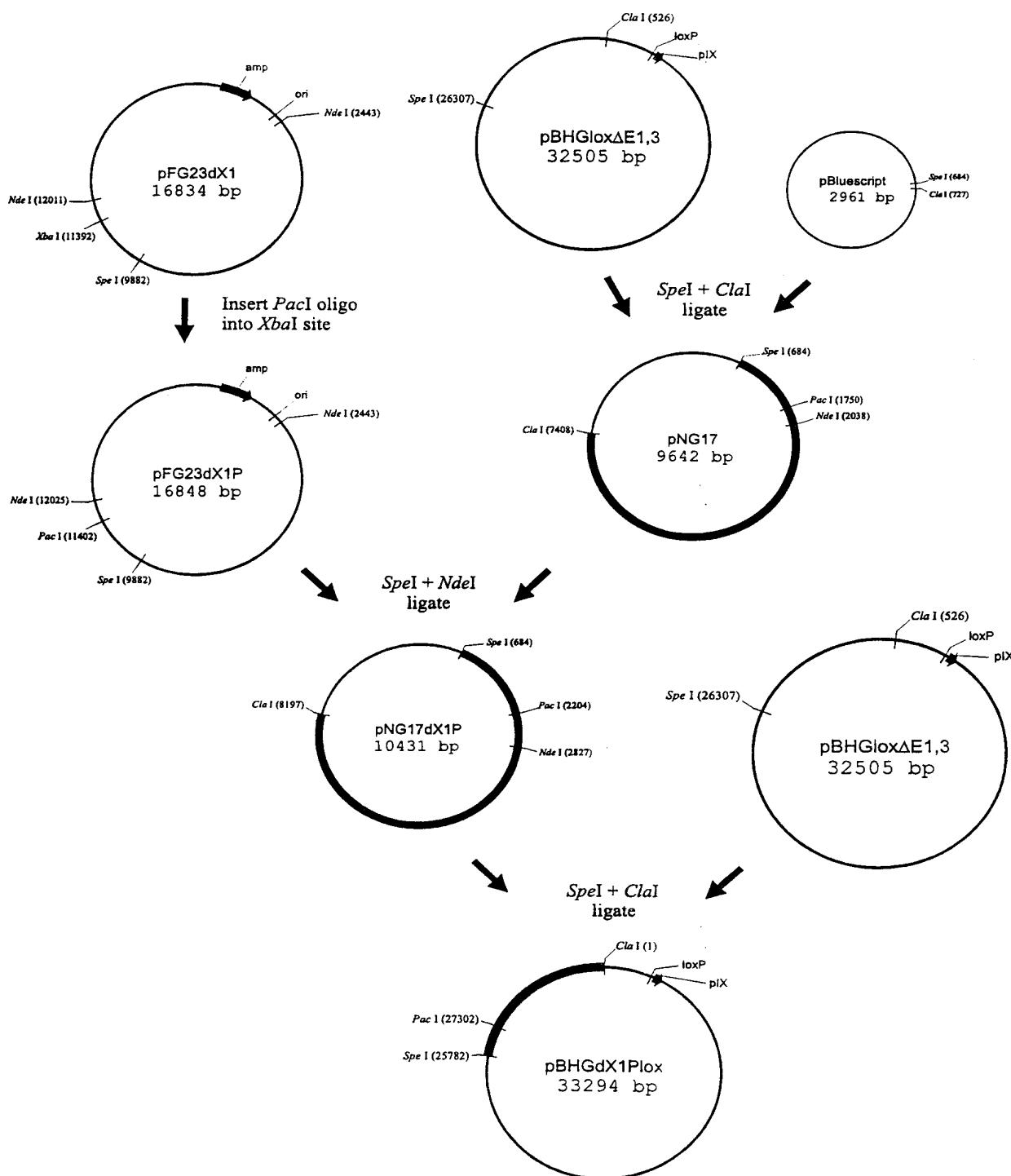


Figure 4a

CONSTRUCTION OF pBHGE3lox

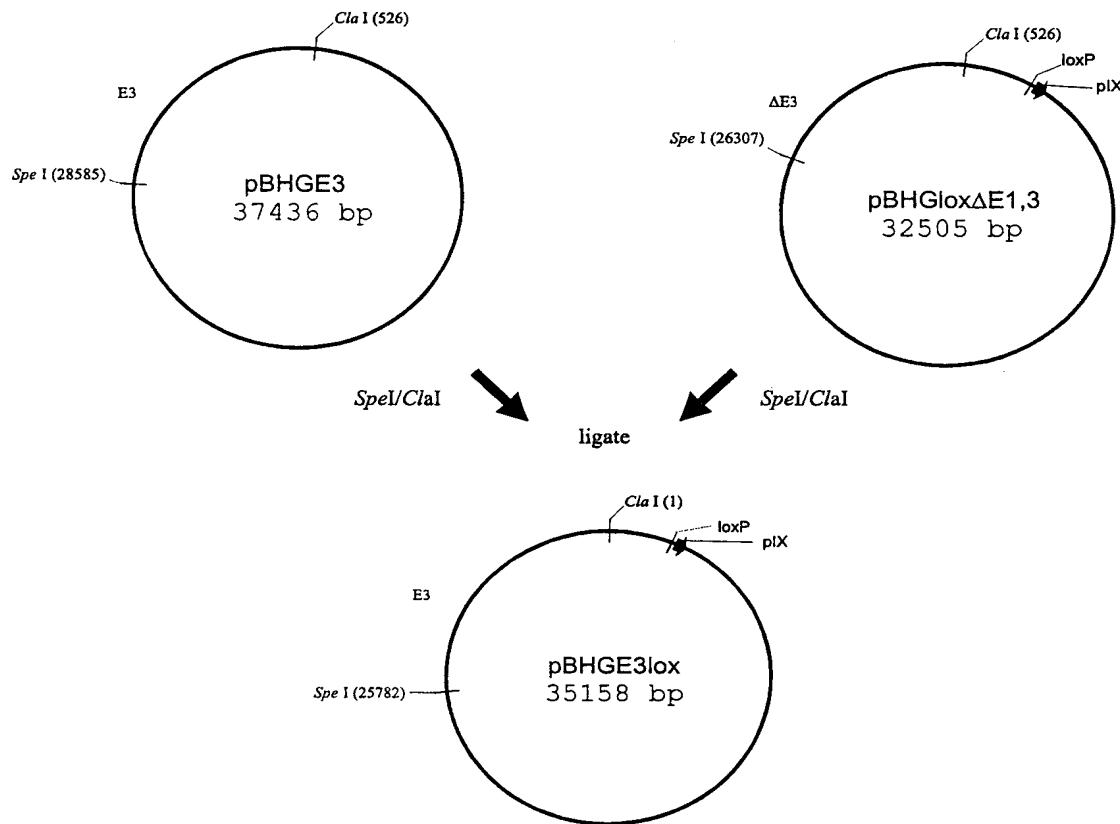


Figure 4b

CONSTRUCTION OF Ad GENOMIC PLASMIDS ENCODING CRE

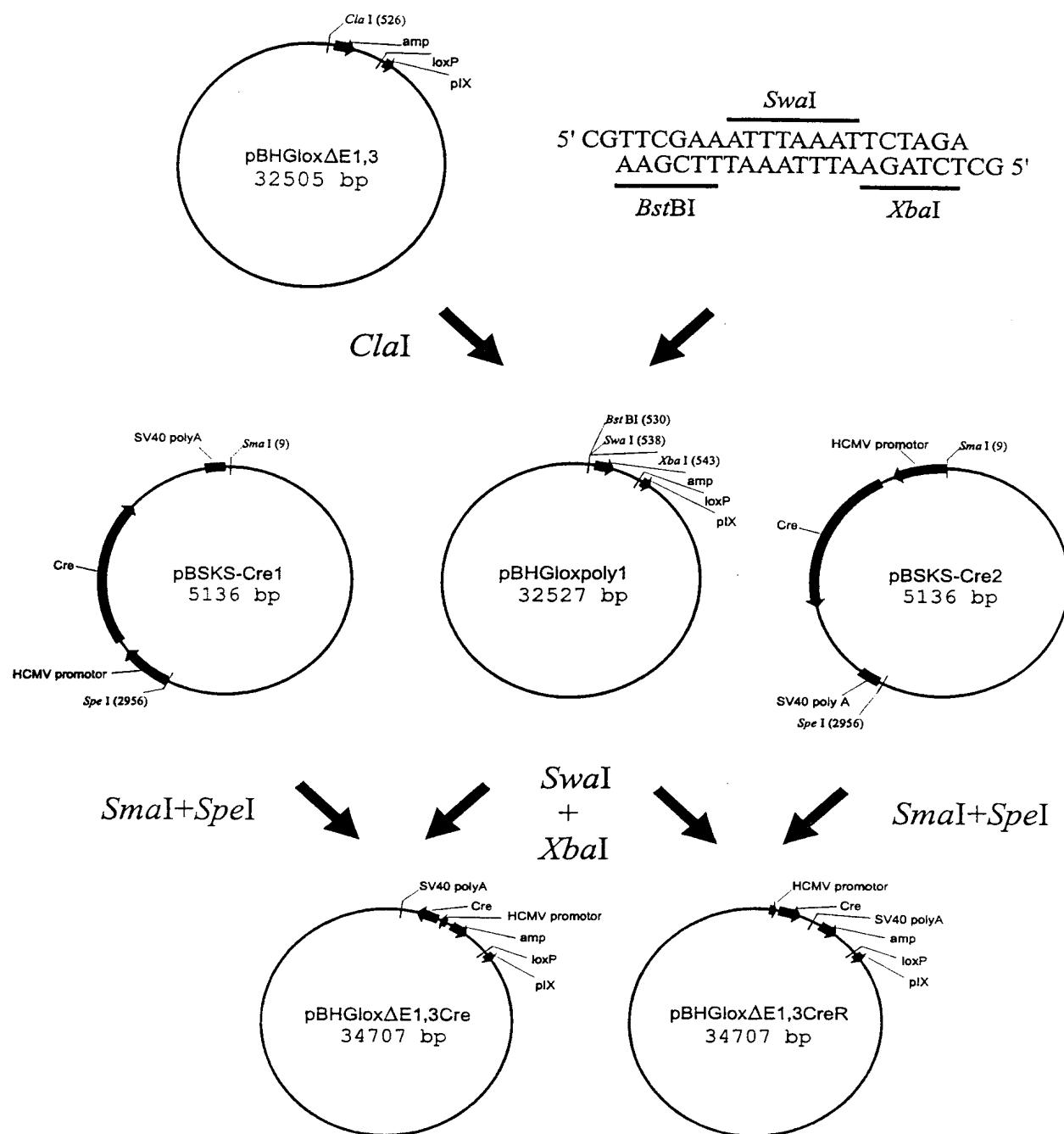


Figure 4c

**CONSTRUCTION OF pΔE1SP1A & pΔE1SP1B loxP PLASMIDS
FOR RESCUE OF FOREIGN DNA**

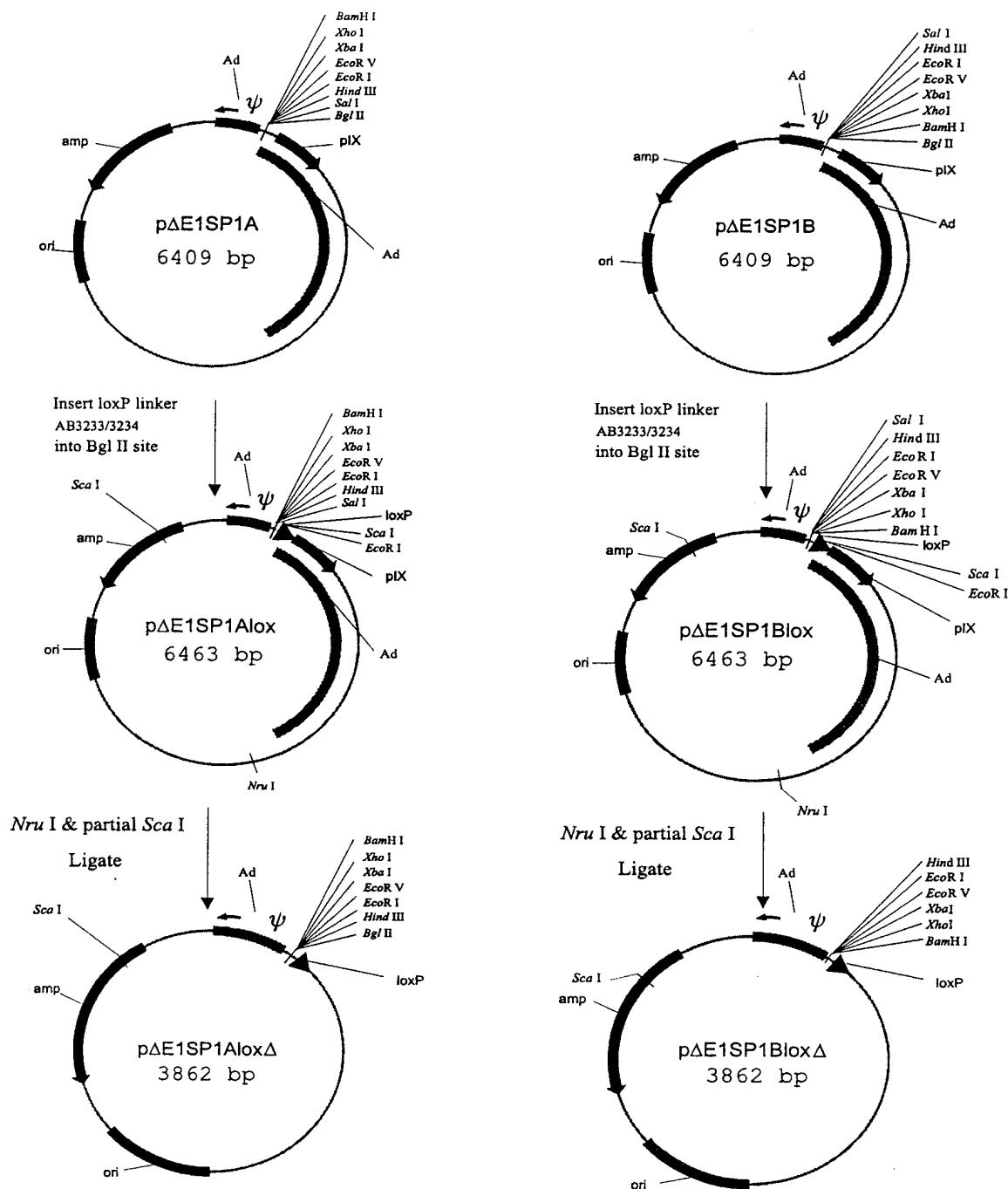


Figure 5

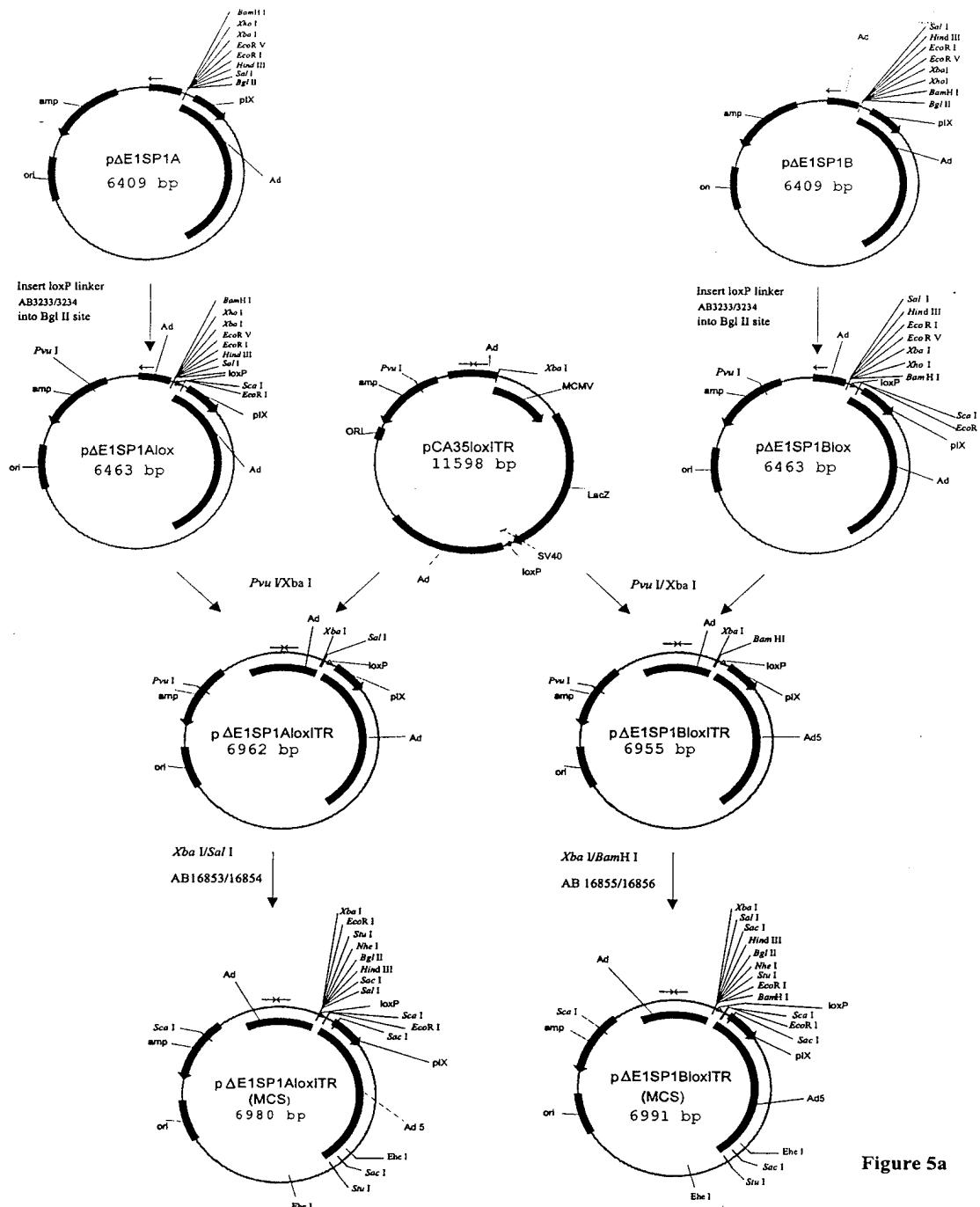


Figure 5a

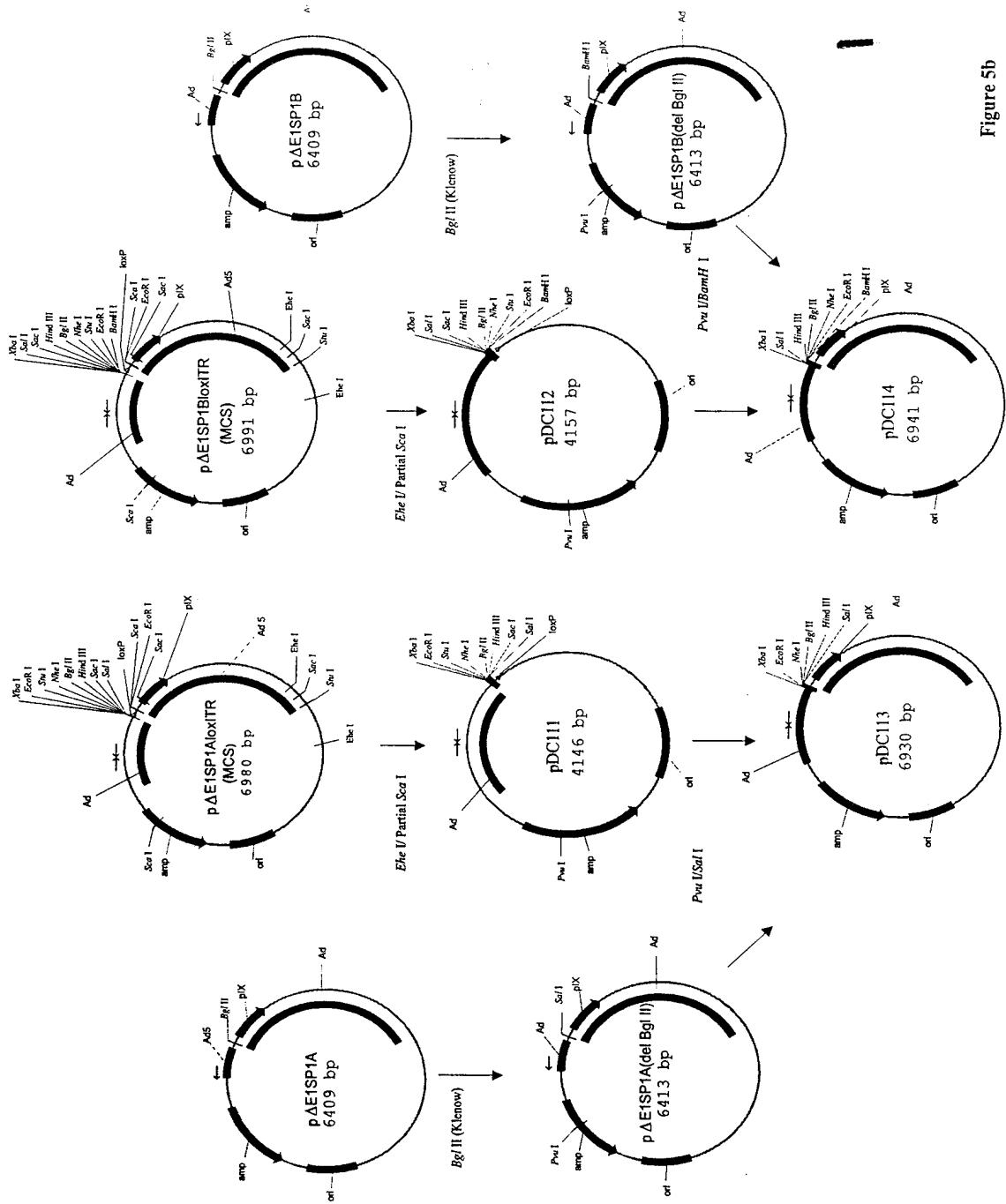
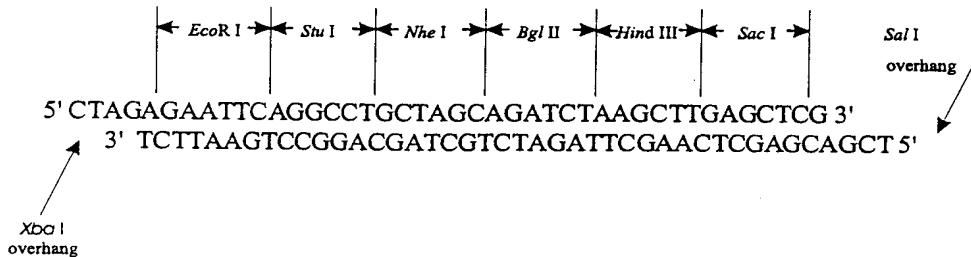


Figure 5b

AB (16853/16854)



AB (16855/16856)

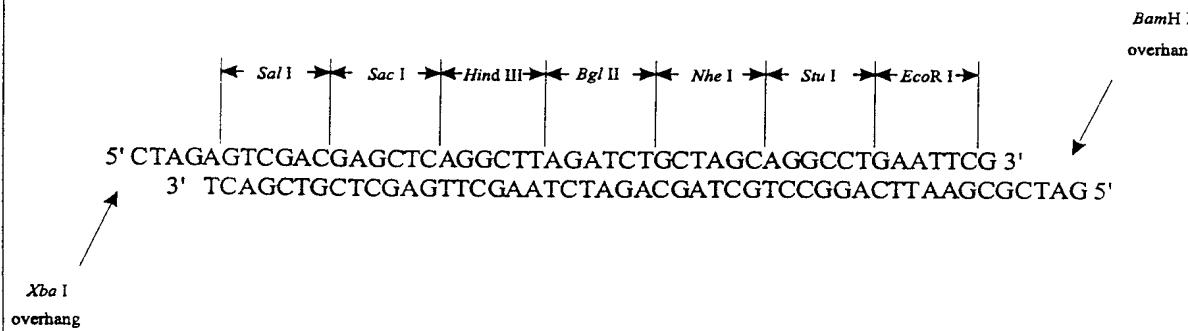


Figure 5c

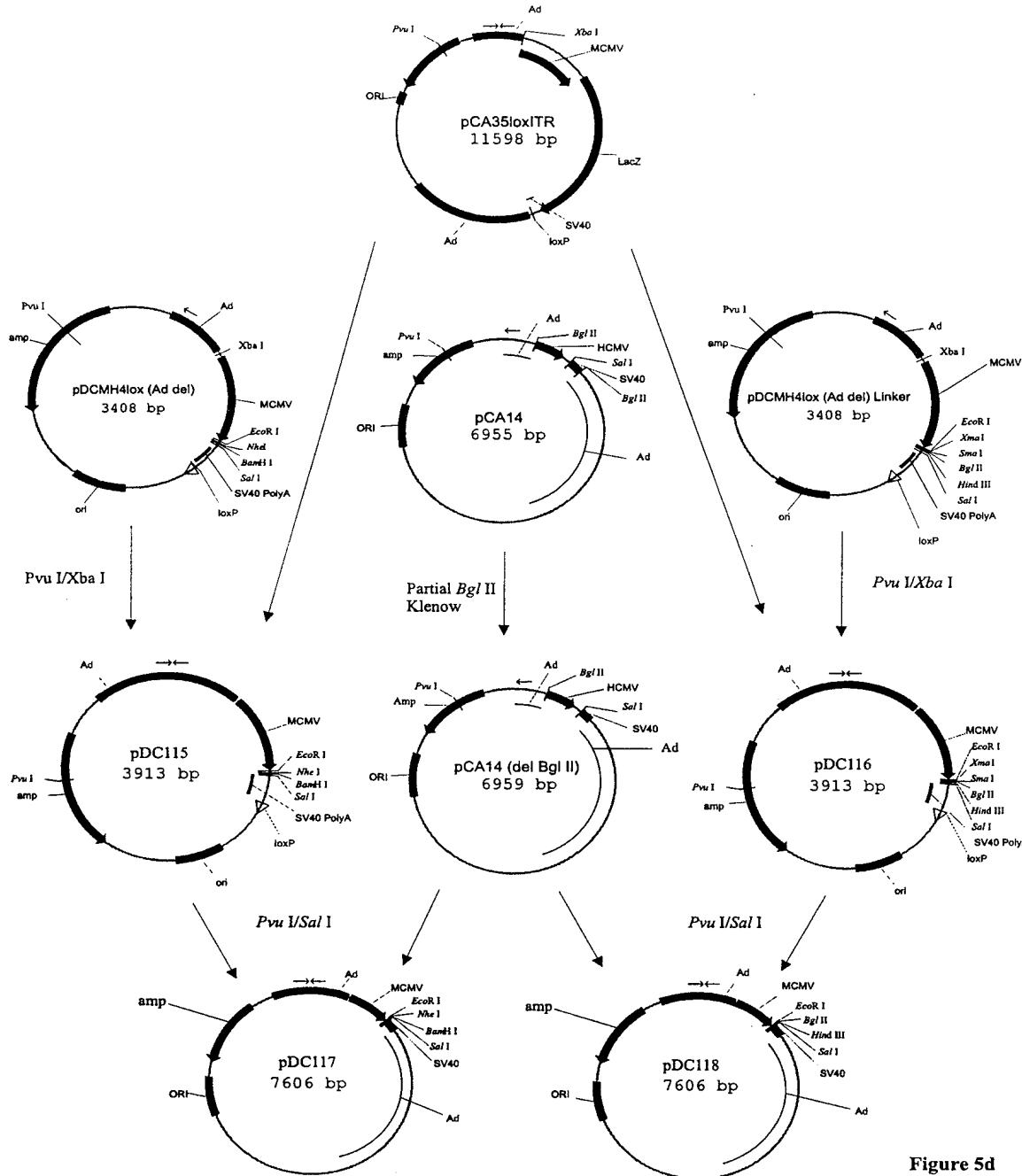


Figure 5d

**CONSTRUCTION OF pMH4LOX, pMH4LOX Δ and pMH4LOX Δ LINK
SHUTTLE PLASMIDS FOR RESCUE OF EXPRESSION CASSETTES**

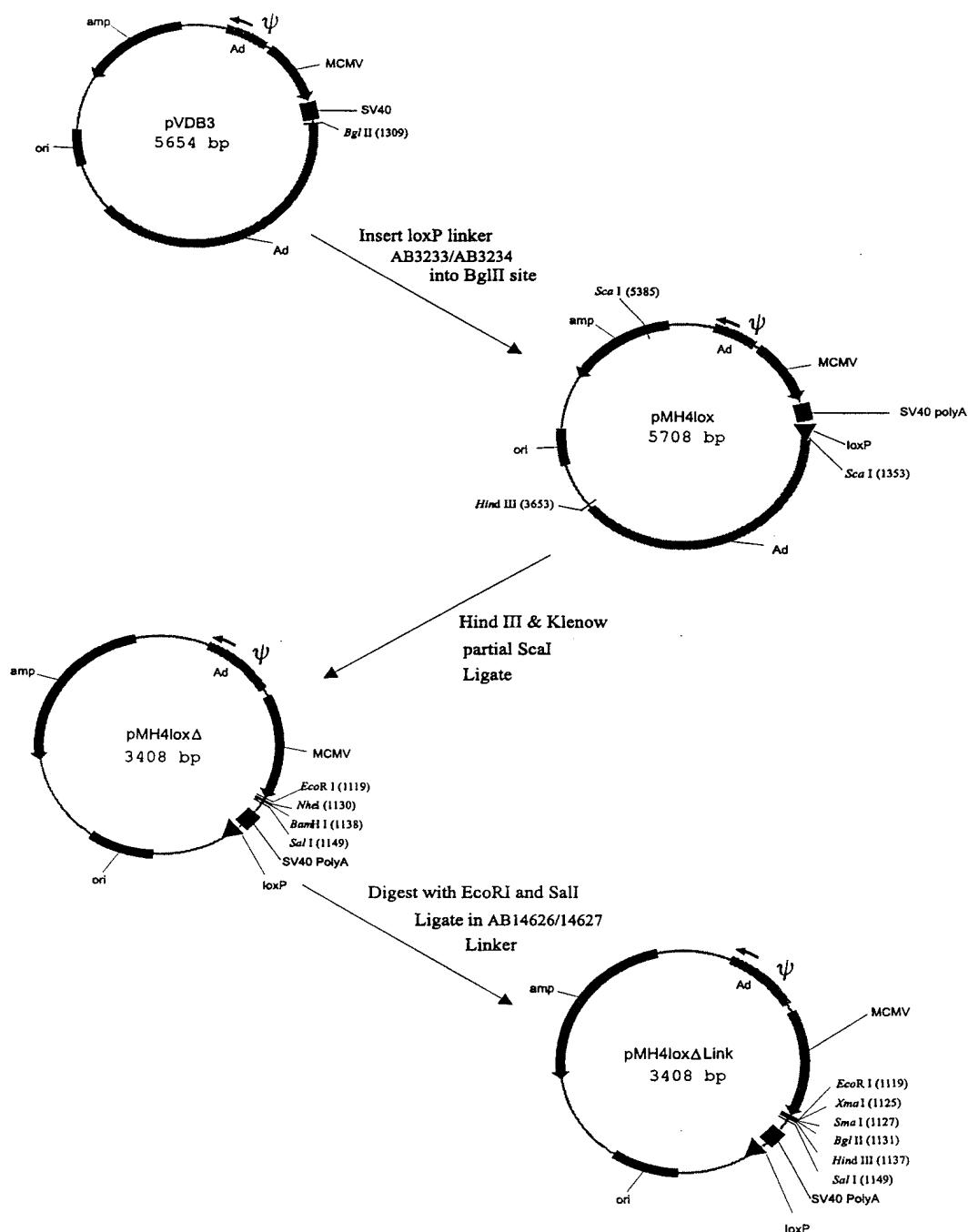


Figure 6

CONSTRUCTION OF A SHUTTLE PLASMID CONTAINING A pUC DERIVED ORIGEN

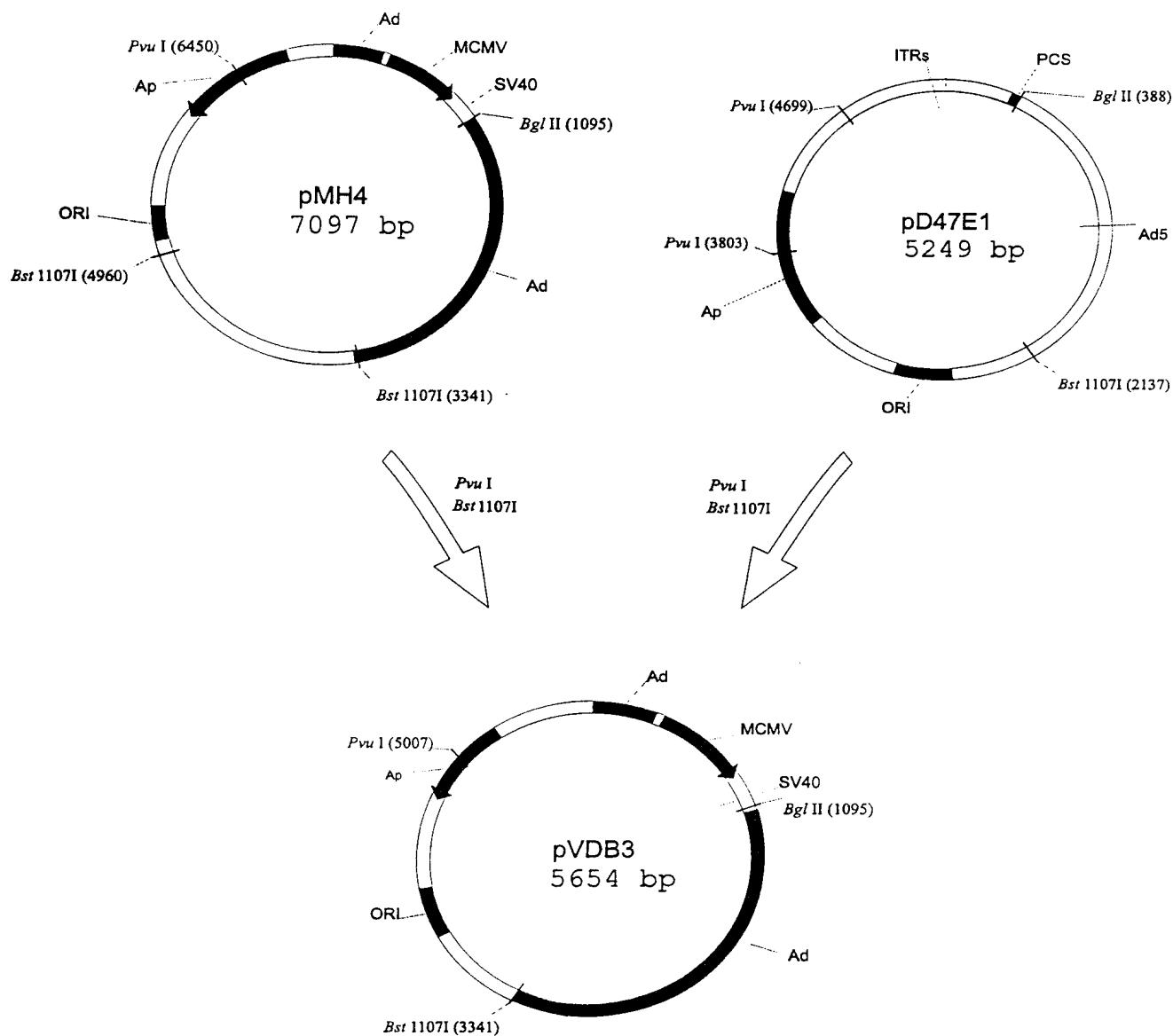


Figure 6a

CONSTRUCTION OF HCMV loxP PLASMIDS FOR RESCUE OF EXPRESSION CASSETTES

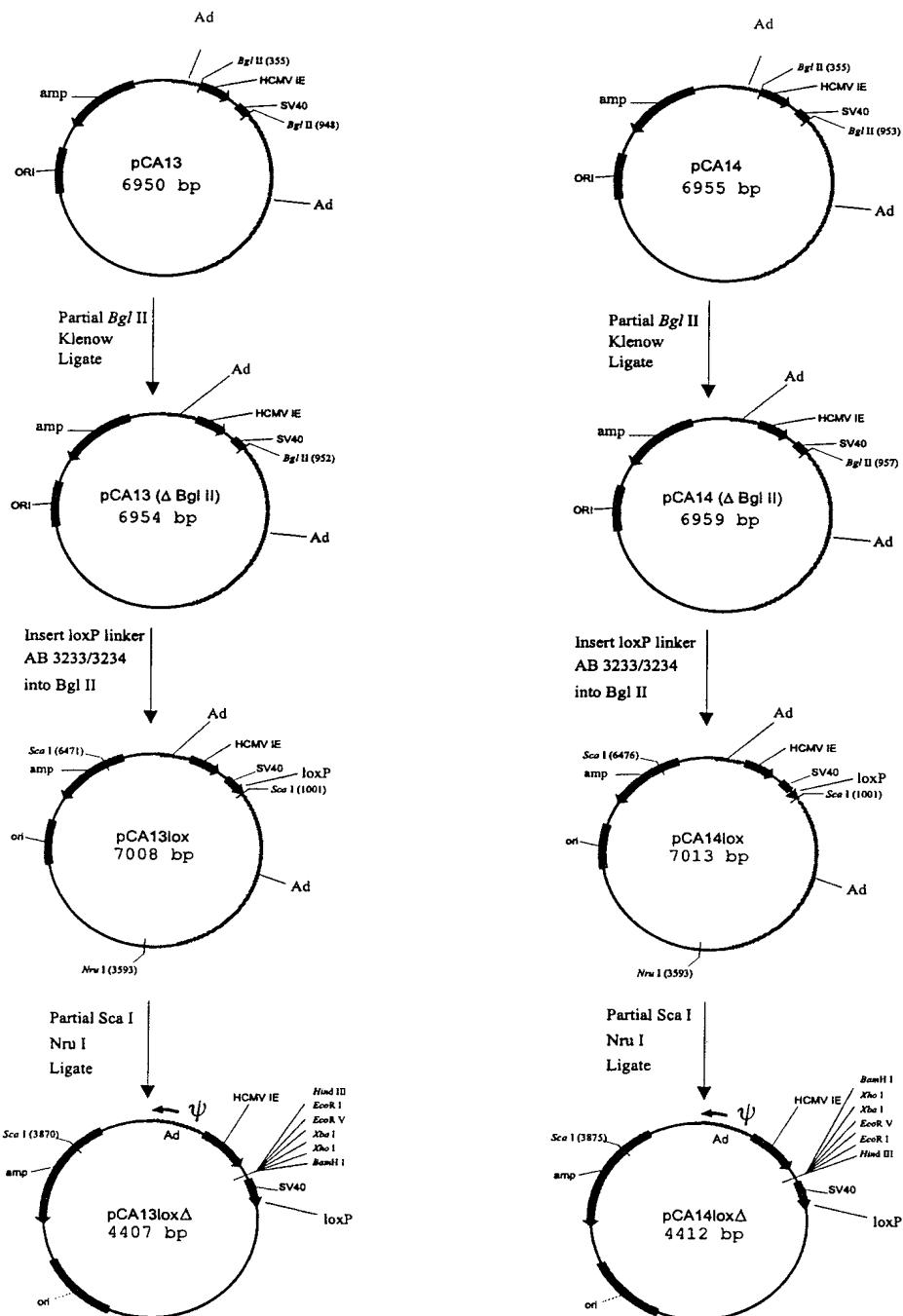


Figure 7

**CONSTRUCTION OF pCA36LOX and pCA36LOX Δ
SHUTTLE PLASMIDS FOR RESCUE OF LACZ**

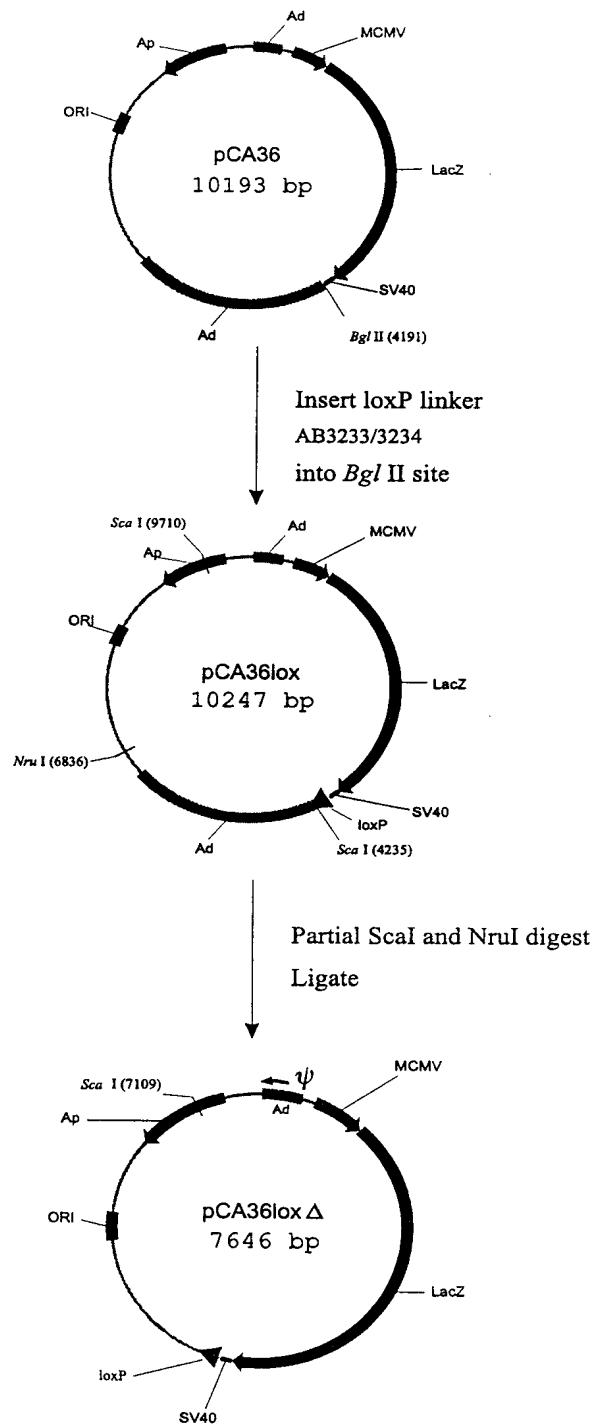


Figure 8

Cotransfection of 293Cre cells with AdLC8c DNA-TP and a shuttle plasmid containing a loxP site for generation of Ad expression vectors

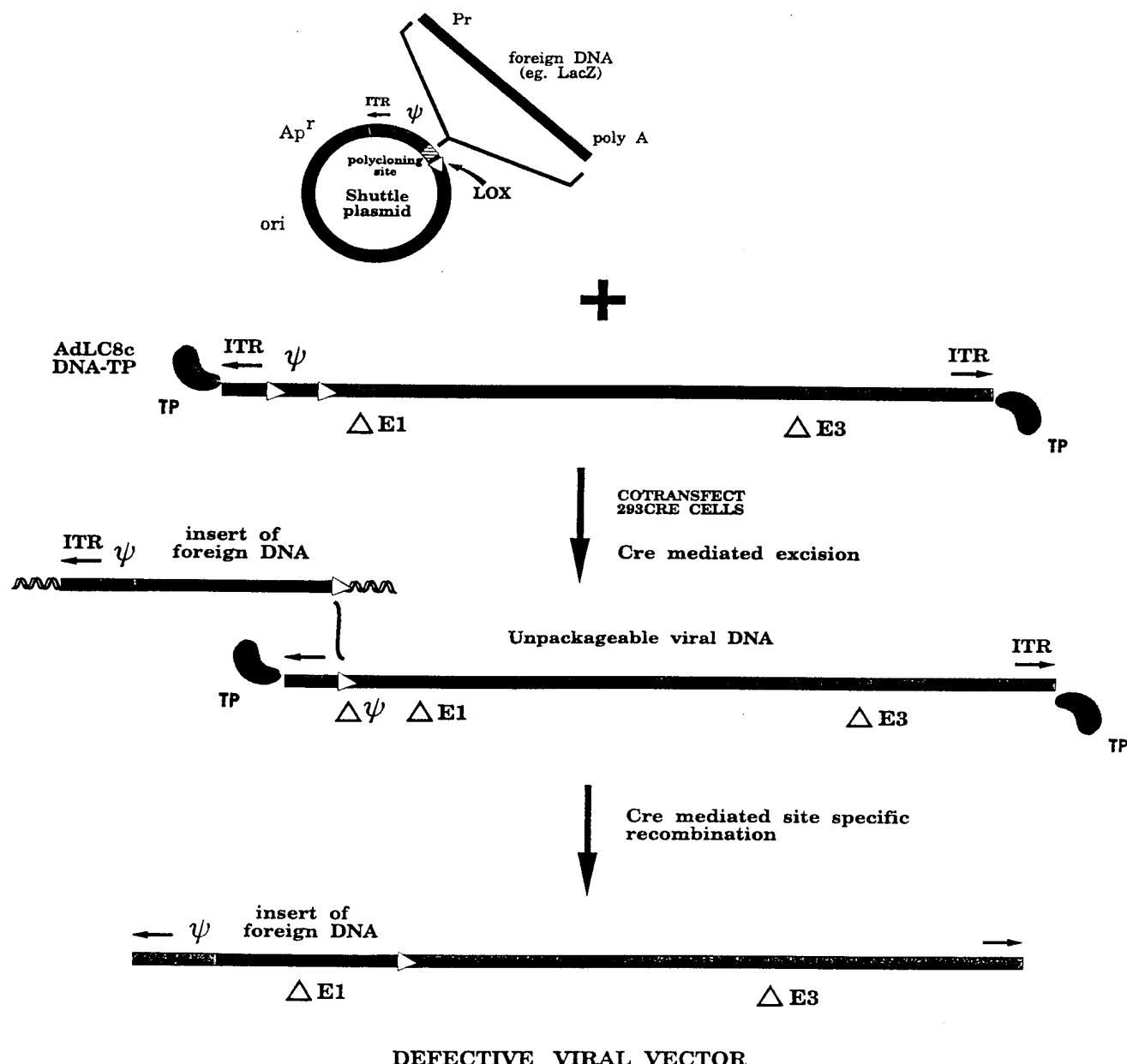


Figure 8a

Cotransfection of 293Cre cells with restricted AdLC8c DNA-TP and loxP shuttle plasmid for generation of Ad expression vectors

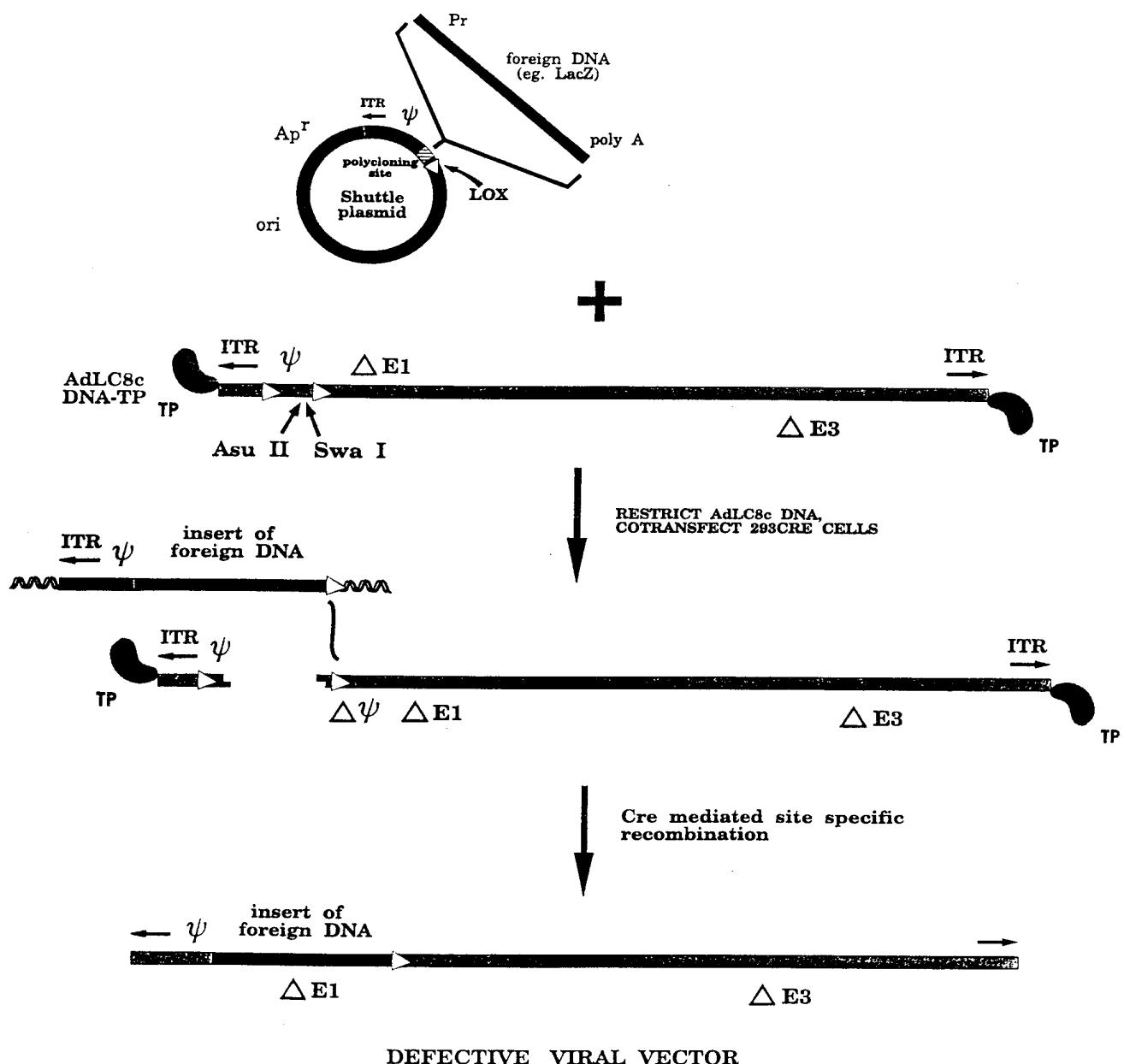


Figure 8b

CONSTRUCTION OF SHUTTLE PLASMIDS EXPRESSING Cre

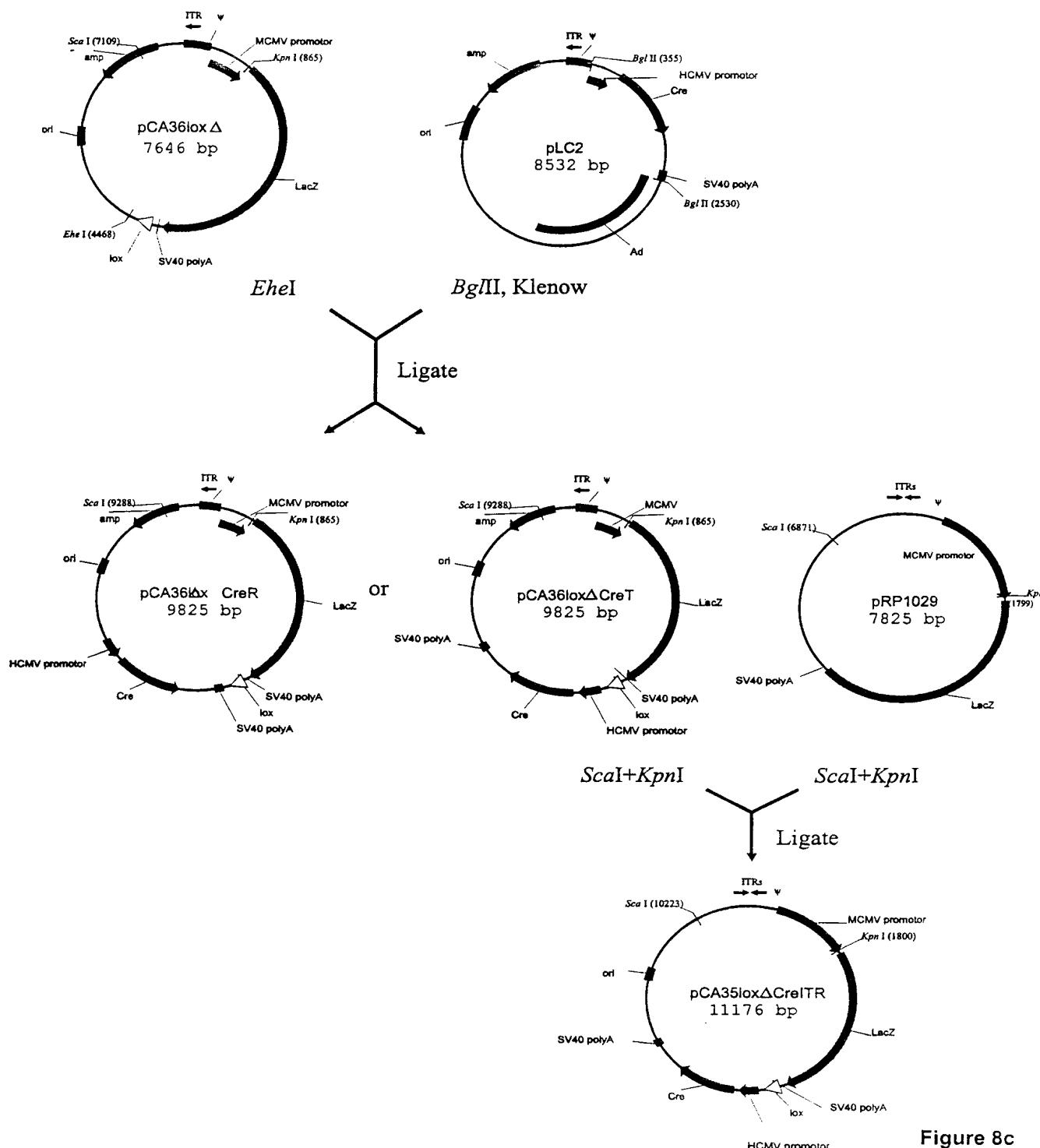


Figure 8c

Cotransfection of 293 cells with pBHGlox Δ E1,3 and a 'Lox-' shuttle plasmid expressing Cre for generation of Ad expression vectors

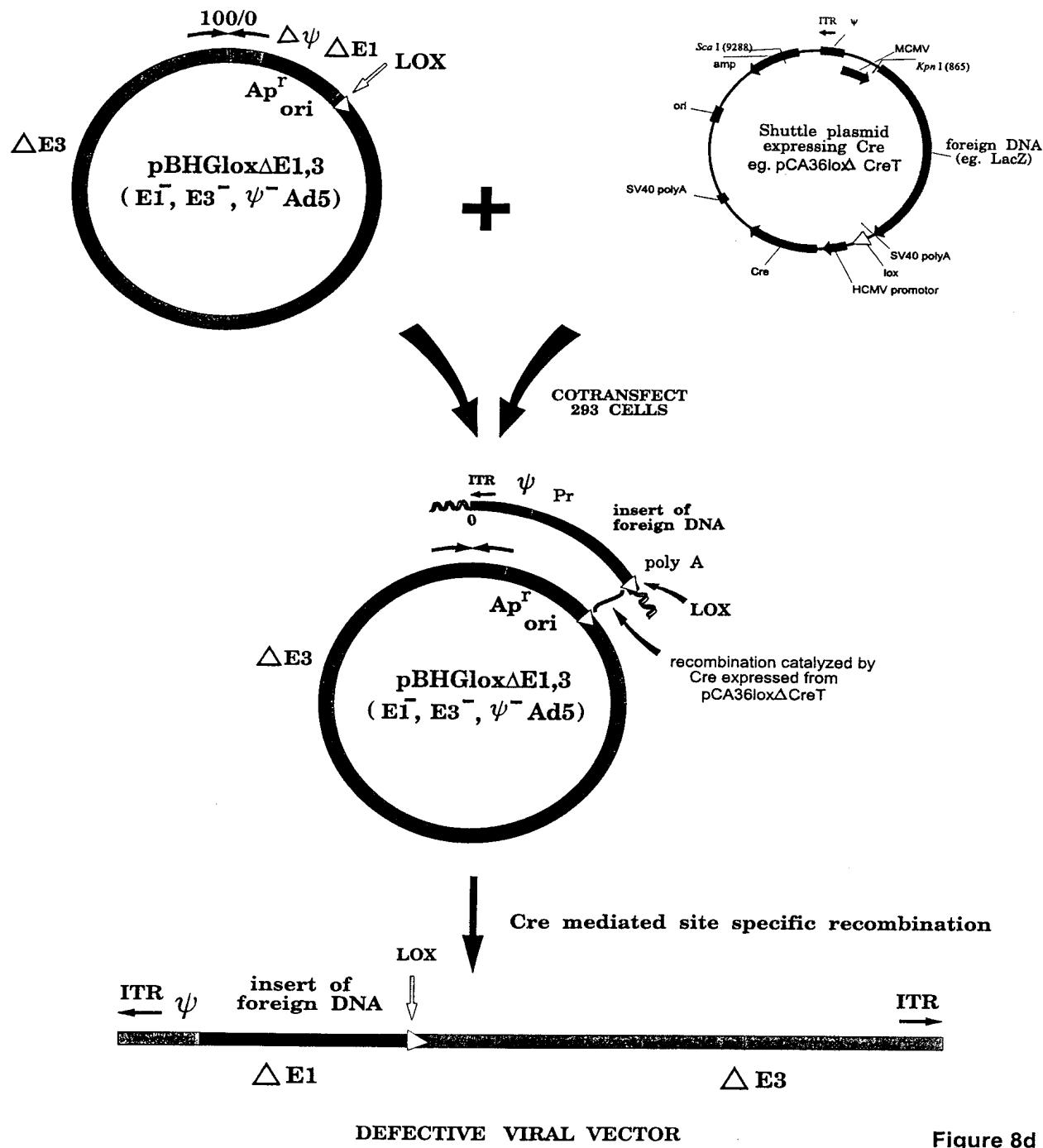


Figure 8d

CONSTRUCTION Ad GENOMIC PLASMID ENCODING CRE

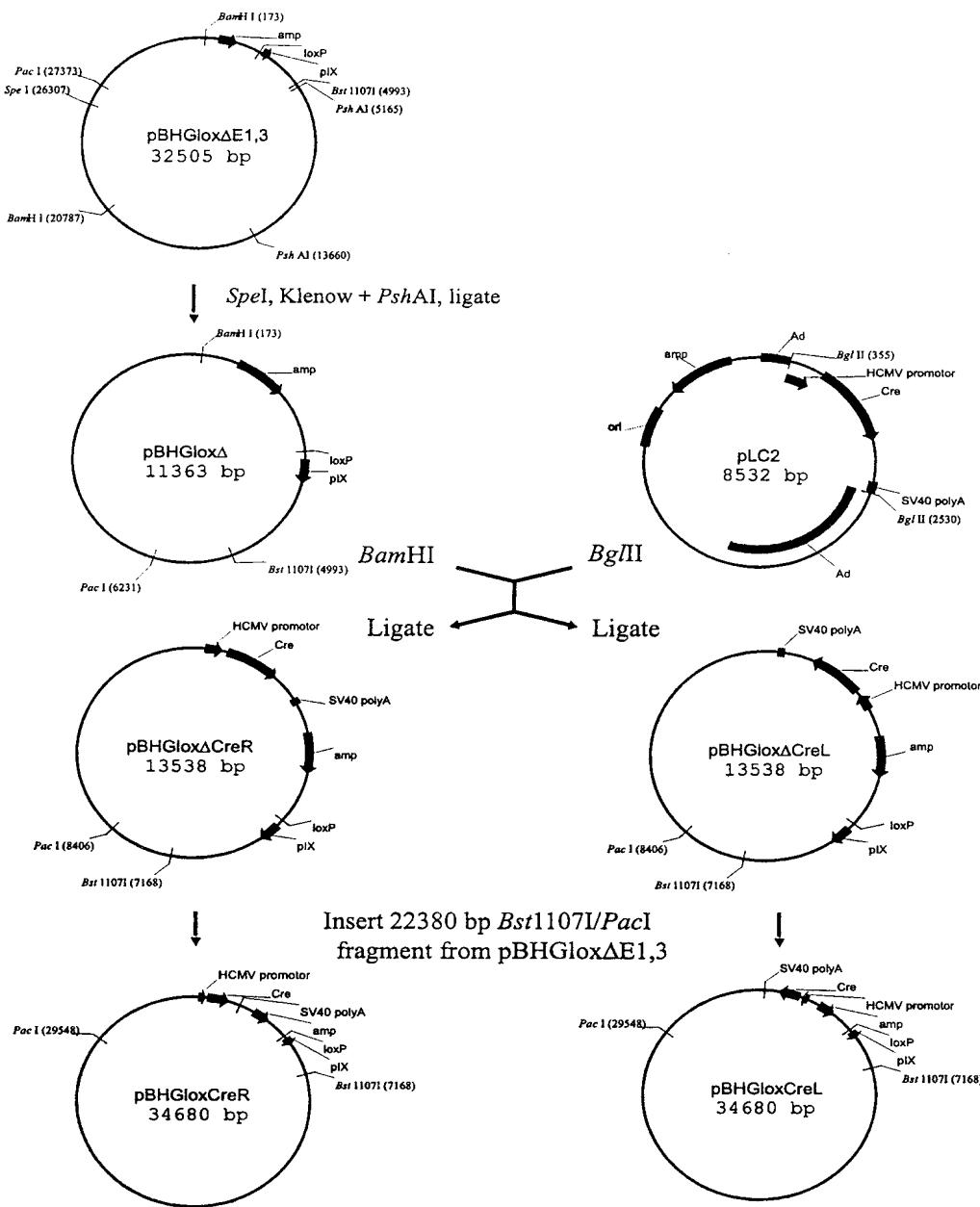


Figure 8e

RESCUE OF FIBRE MUTATIONS USING CRE/LOX RECOMBINATION

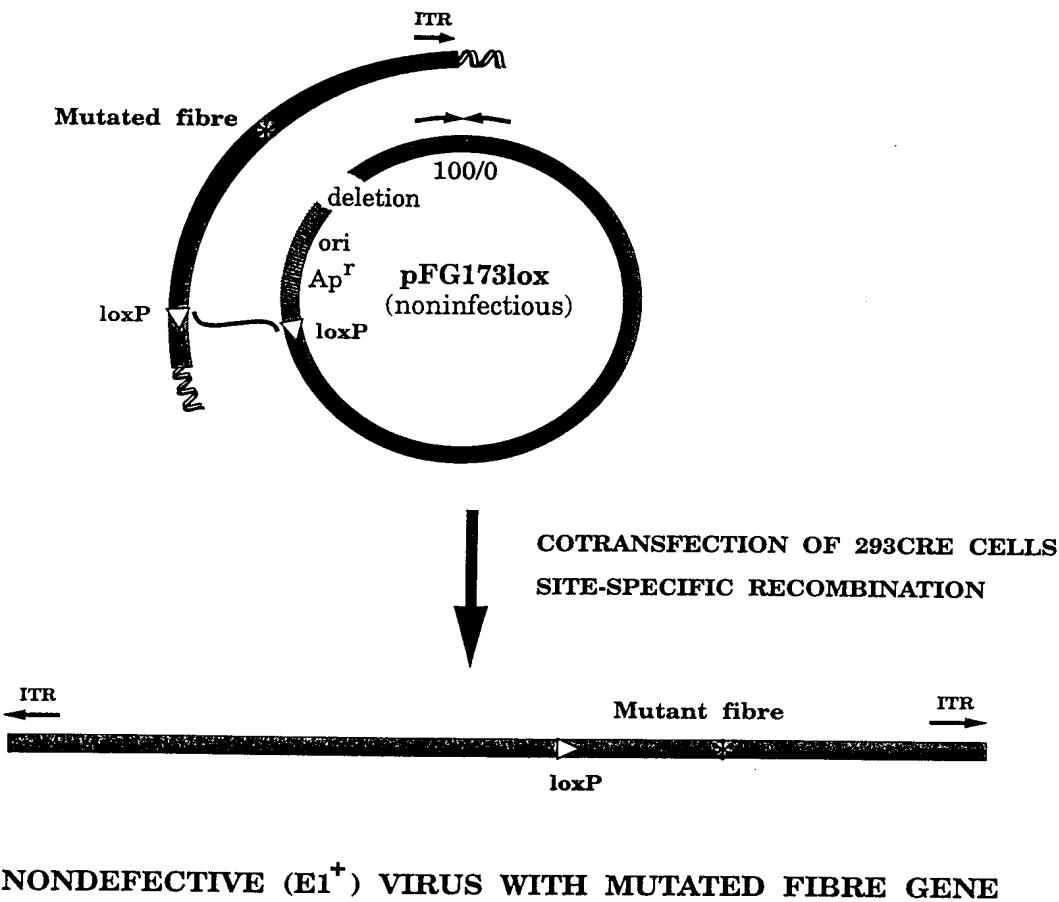


Figure 9

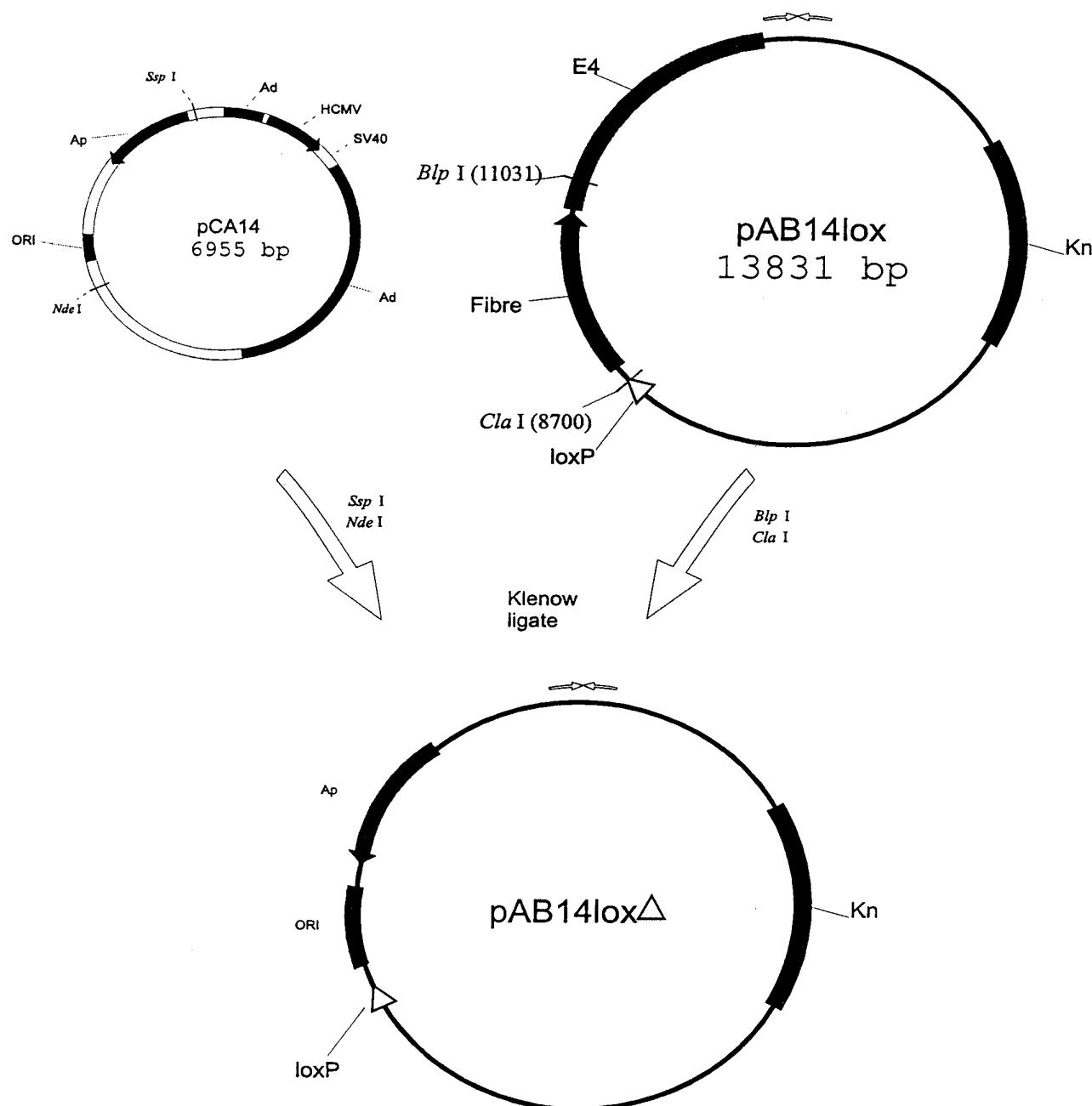
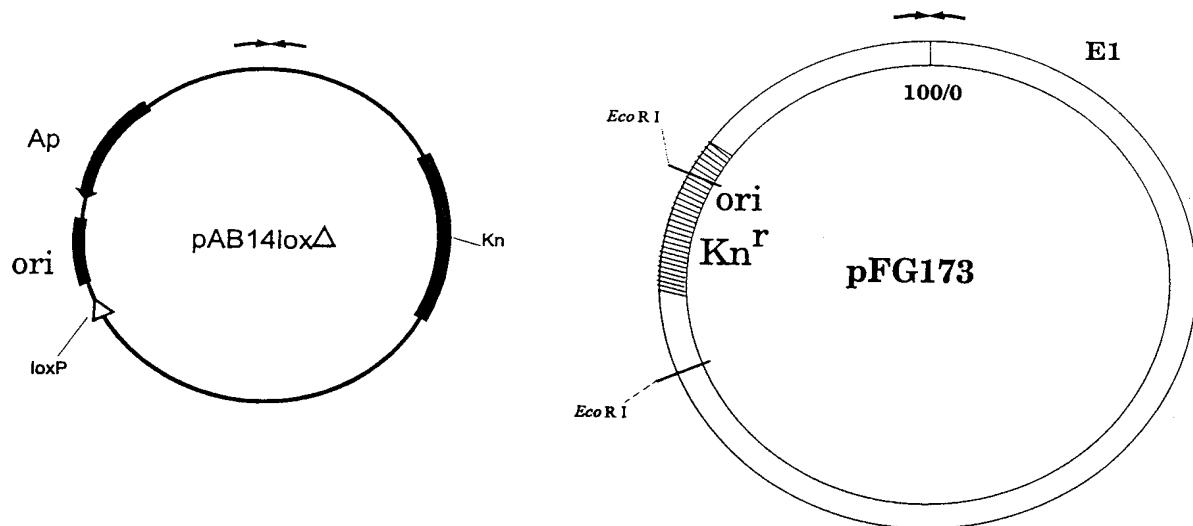
CONSTRUCTION OF pAB14lox Δ 

Figure 9a

CONSTRUCTION OF pFG173lox



**Restriction, transformation of *E. coli*,
homologous recombination**

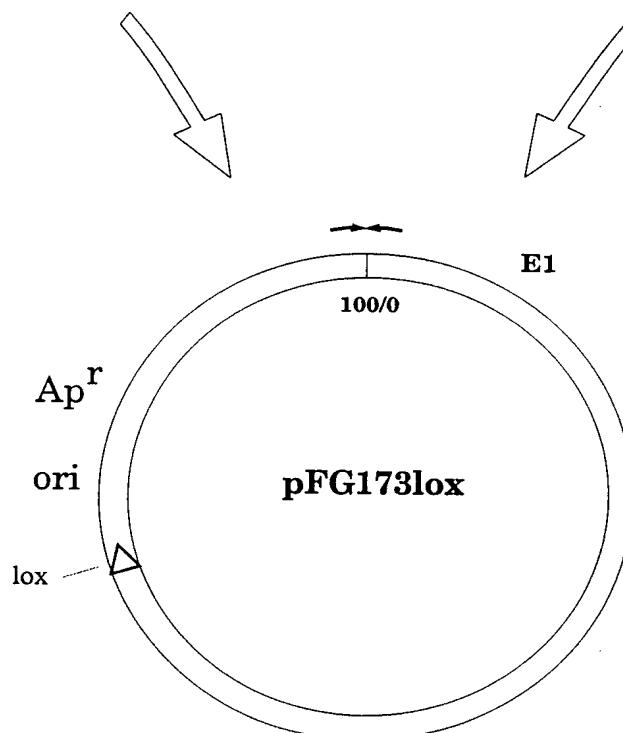


Figure 9b

CONSTRUCTION OF pFG23dX1lox AND pFG23dX1lox_c FOR RESCUE OF MUTANT FIBRE INTO AD VIRUS

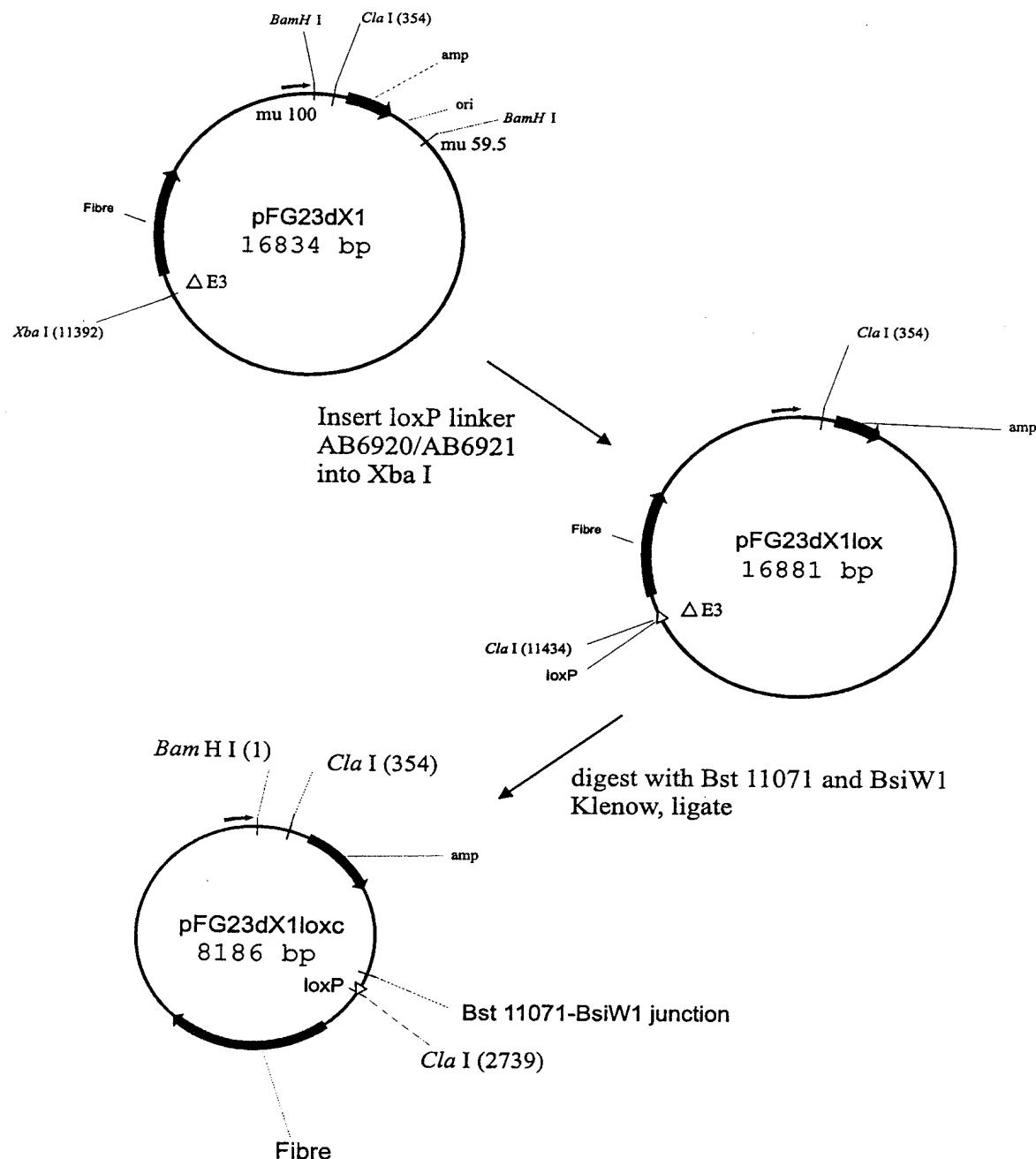


Figure 10

A PLASMID FOR RESCUE OF A FOREIGN DNA INTO AD VIRUS

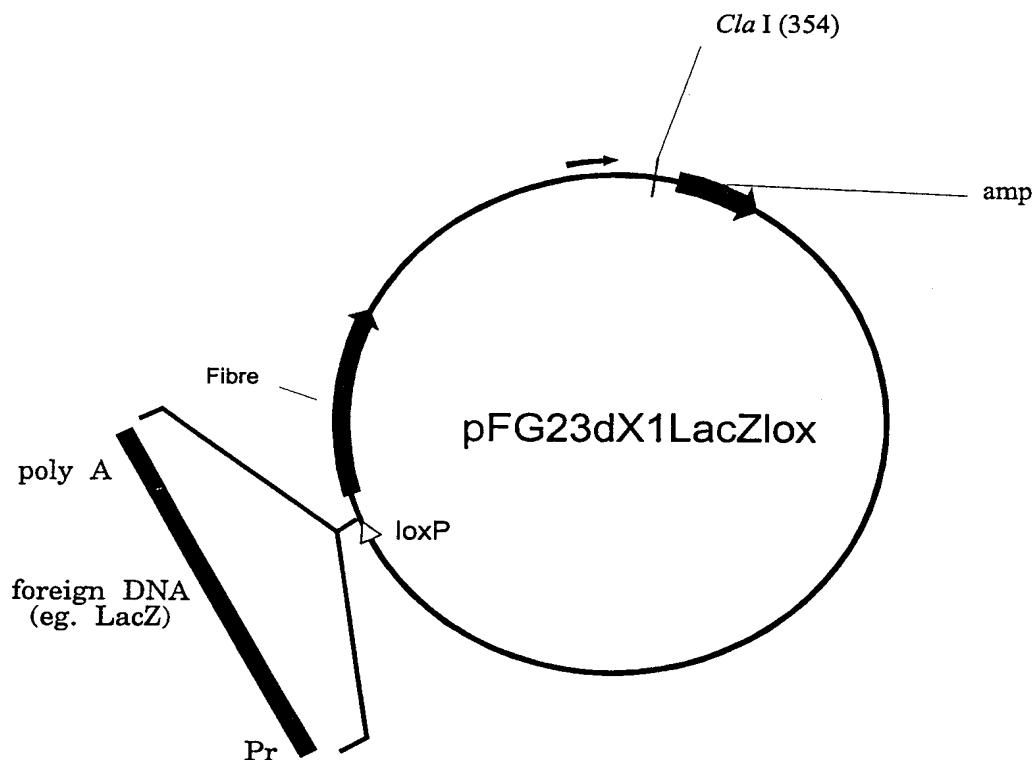
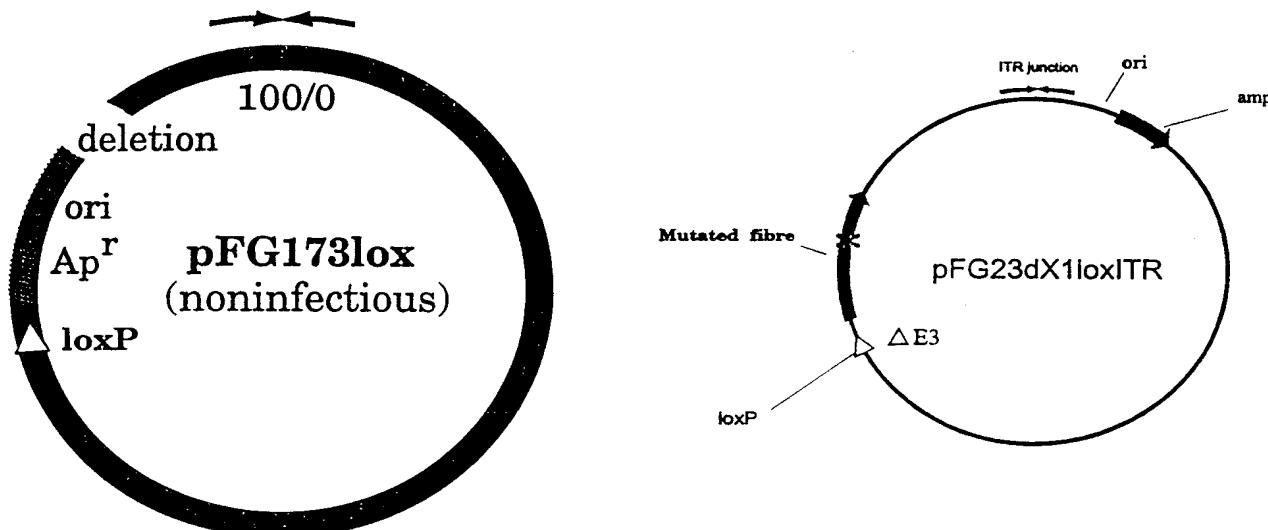


Figure 11

RESCUE OF FIBRE MUTATIONS USING CRE/LOX RECOMBINATION



COTRANSFECTION OF 293CRE CELLS
SITE-SPECIFIC RECOMBINATION



NONDEFECTIVE (E1⁺) VIRUS WITH MUTATED FIBRE GENE

FIGURE 11a

**Isolation of a virus containing a mutant fibre gene
by Cre-lox recombination using DNA-TP and cotransfection**

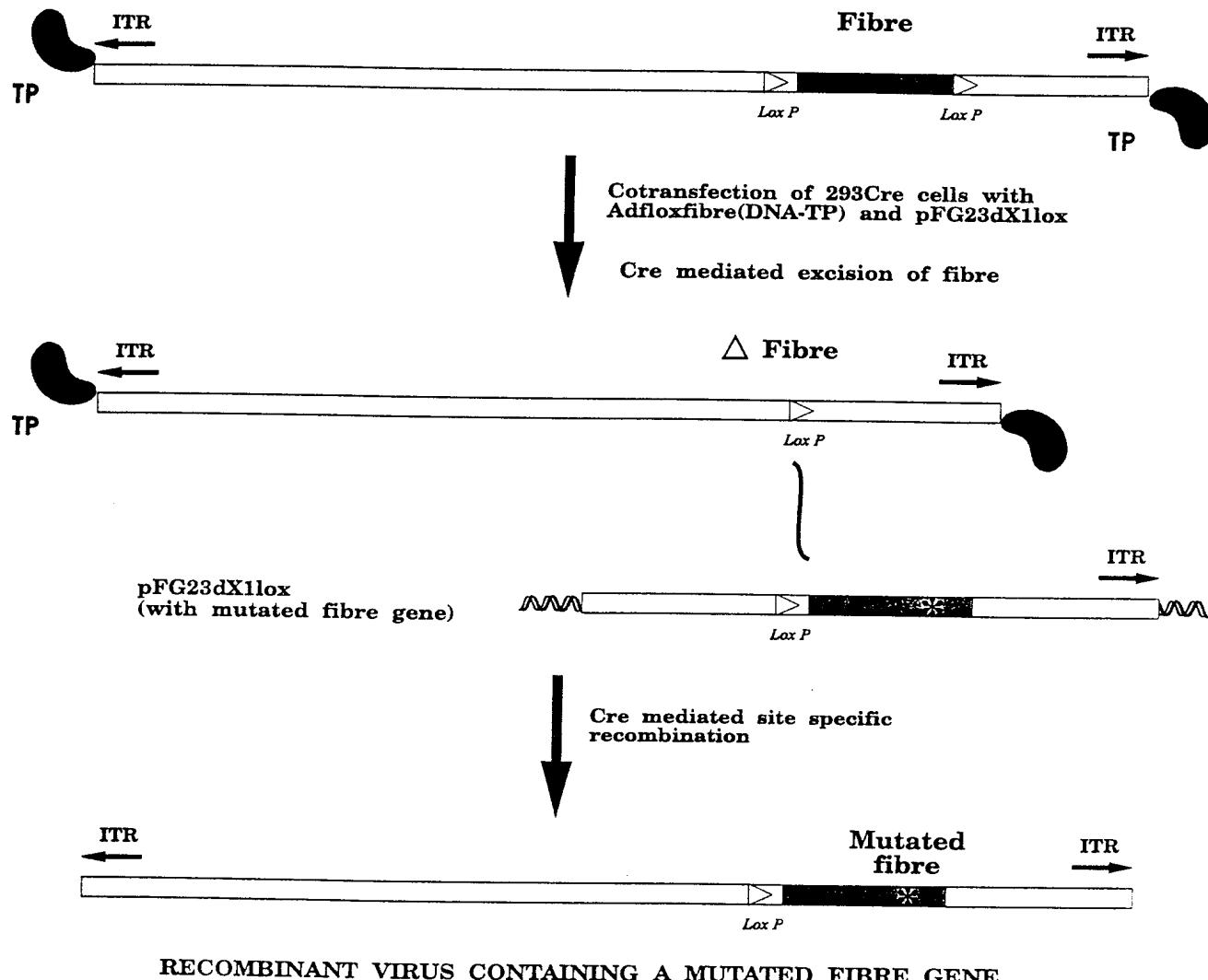


Figure 12

Isolation of a virus containing a foreign DNA insert upstream of the fibre gene by Cre-lox recombination

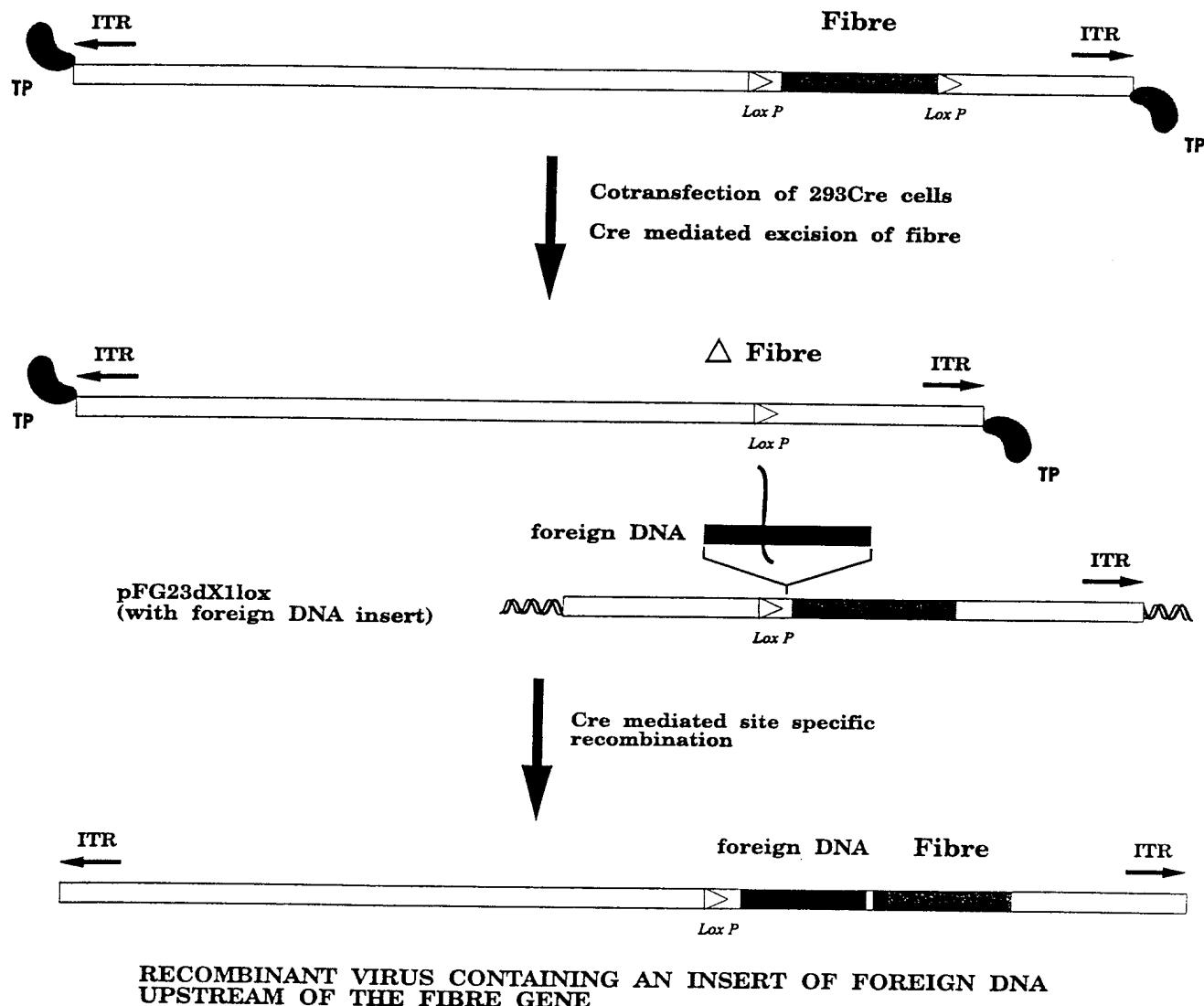


Figure 13

CONSTRUCTION OF pAB14FL0X FOR ISOLATION OF AN AD VIRUS WITH A FLOXED FIBRE GENE

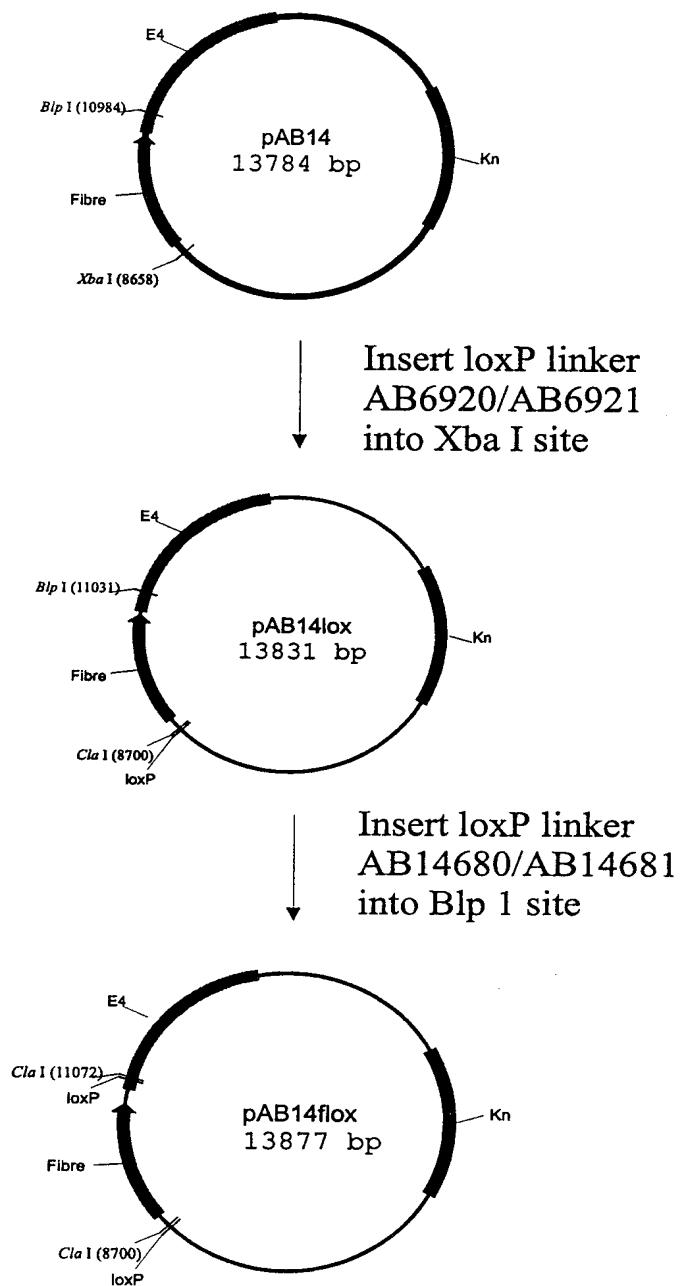


Figure 14

**Isolation of a virus containing
a fibre gene with flanking lox P sites.**

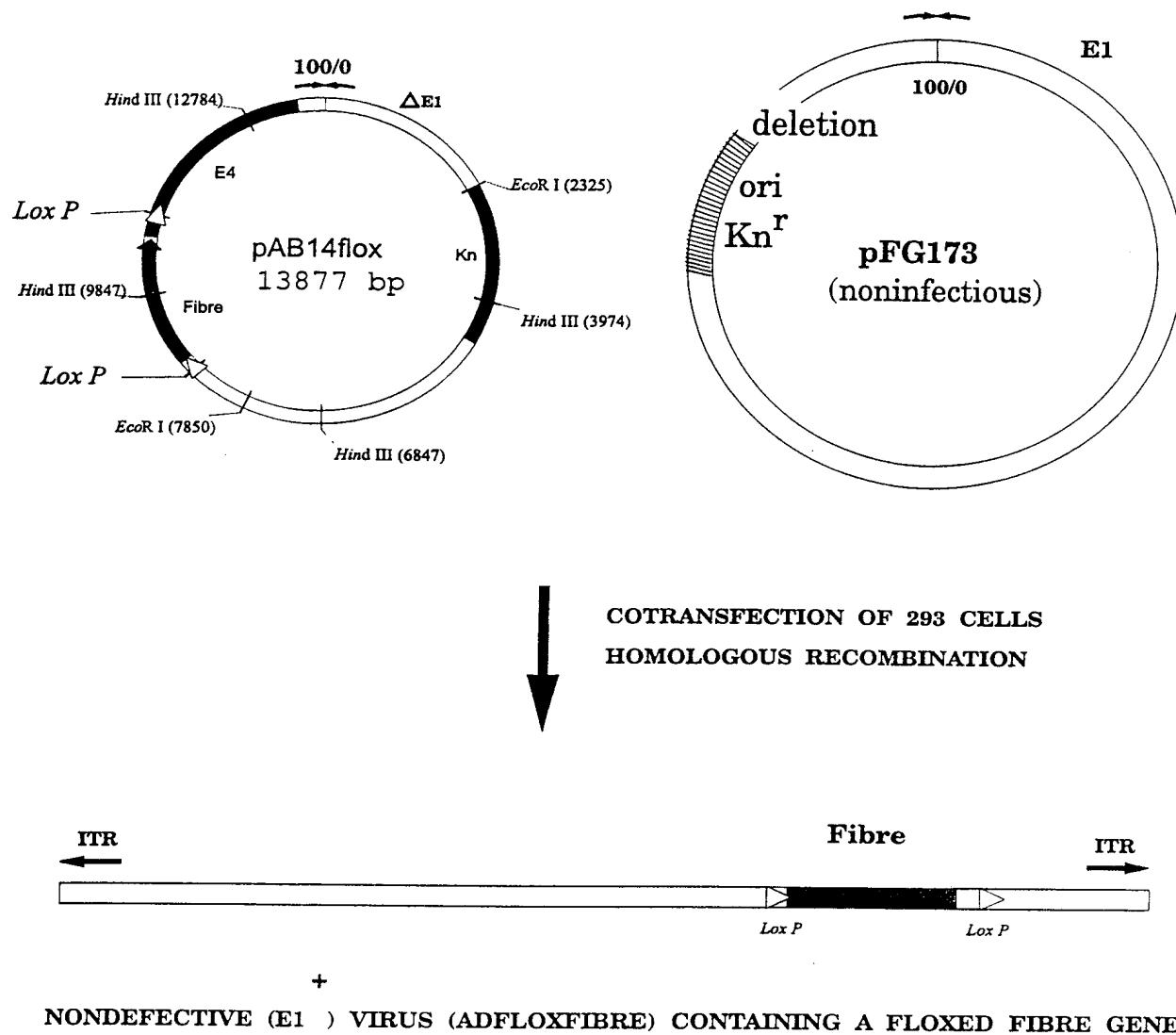
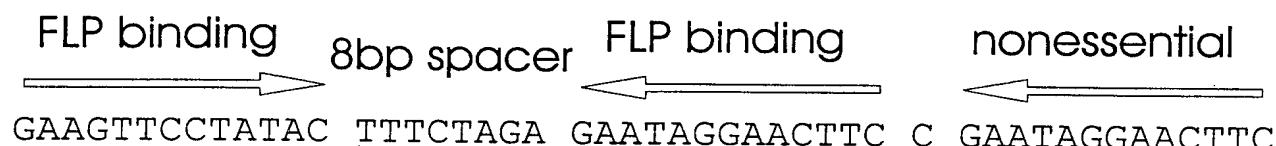


Figure 15

FLP: a 43 kD site specific recombinase
(encoded by 2 μ plasmid of yeast)

FLP acts on frt:



FLP catalyzes site specific recombination
between frt sites

FIGURE 16A

**CONSTRUCTION OF Ad GENOMIC PLASMID
FOR Ad VECTOR RESCUE USING THE FLP/frt SYSTEM**

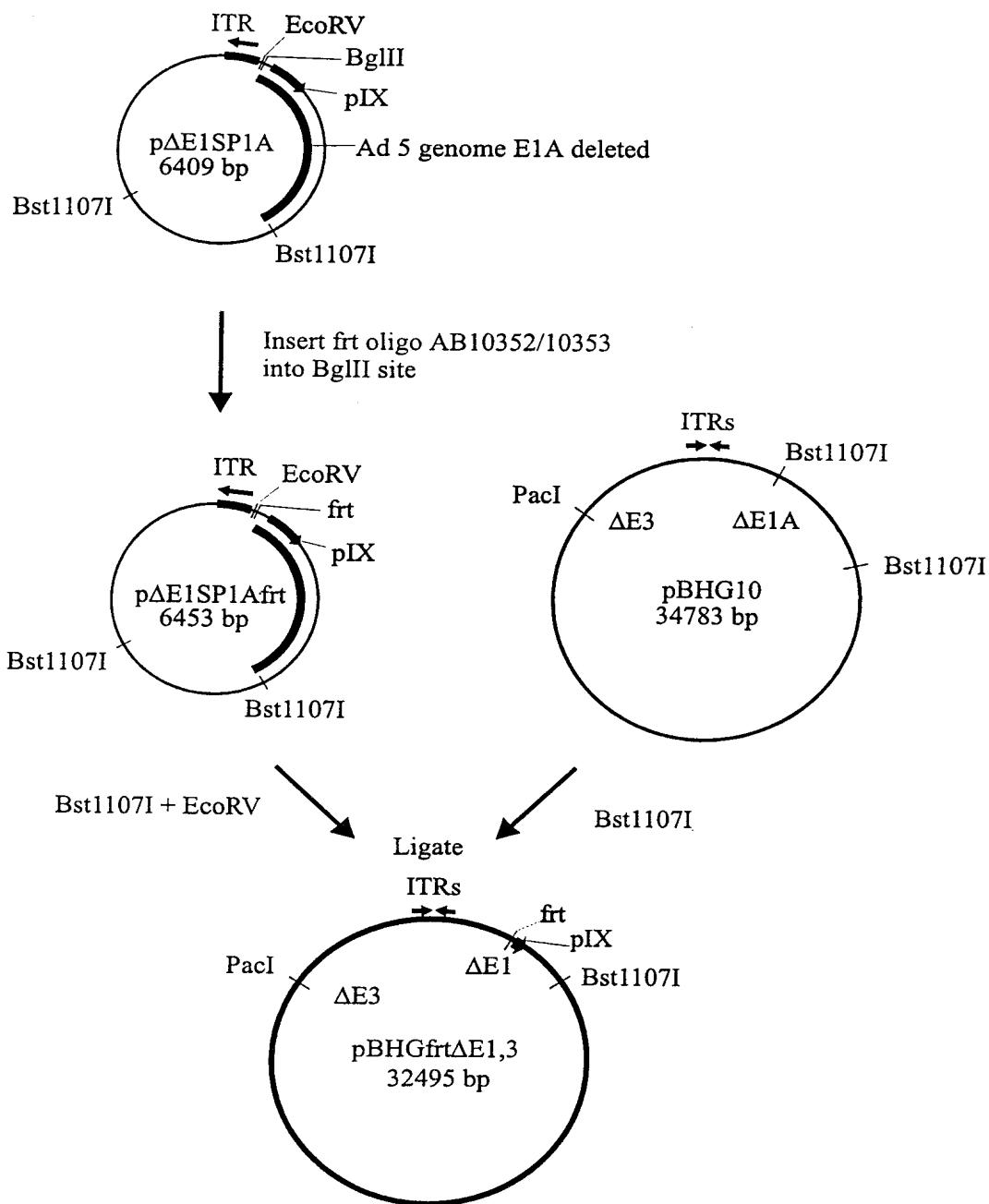


FIGURE 16B

Synthetic oligonucleotides used for plasmid DNA constructions

AB10352: 5' GATCGAAGTTCCCTATACTCTAGTAAGAACAGGAACCTCGAATTG 3'

AB10353: 5' GATCGAATTCGAAGTTCCCTATTCTTACTAGAGTATAGGAACCTTC 3'

AB16519: 5' CGTCGAAATTAAATTCTAGA 3'

AB16520: 5' GCTCTAGAATTAAATTTCGAA 3'

AB19509: 5' GATCTAAGCTTGAAGTTCCCTATTCTTACTAGAGTATAGGAACCTCGGC 3'

AB19510: 5' GCCGAAGTTCCCTATACTCTAGTAAGAACAGGAACCTCAAGCTTA 3'

AB19816: 5' GATCCGAAGTTCCCTATTCTTACTAGAGTATAGGAACCTCGACTA 3'

AB19817: 5' TAGTCGAAGTTCCCTATACTCTAGTAAGAACAGGAACCTCG 3'

FIGURE 16C

CONSTRUCTION OF LACZ SHUTTLE PLASMID FOR FLP-MEDIATED VECTOR RESCUE

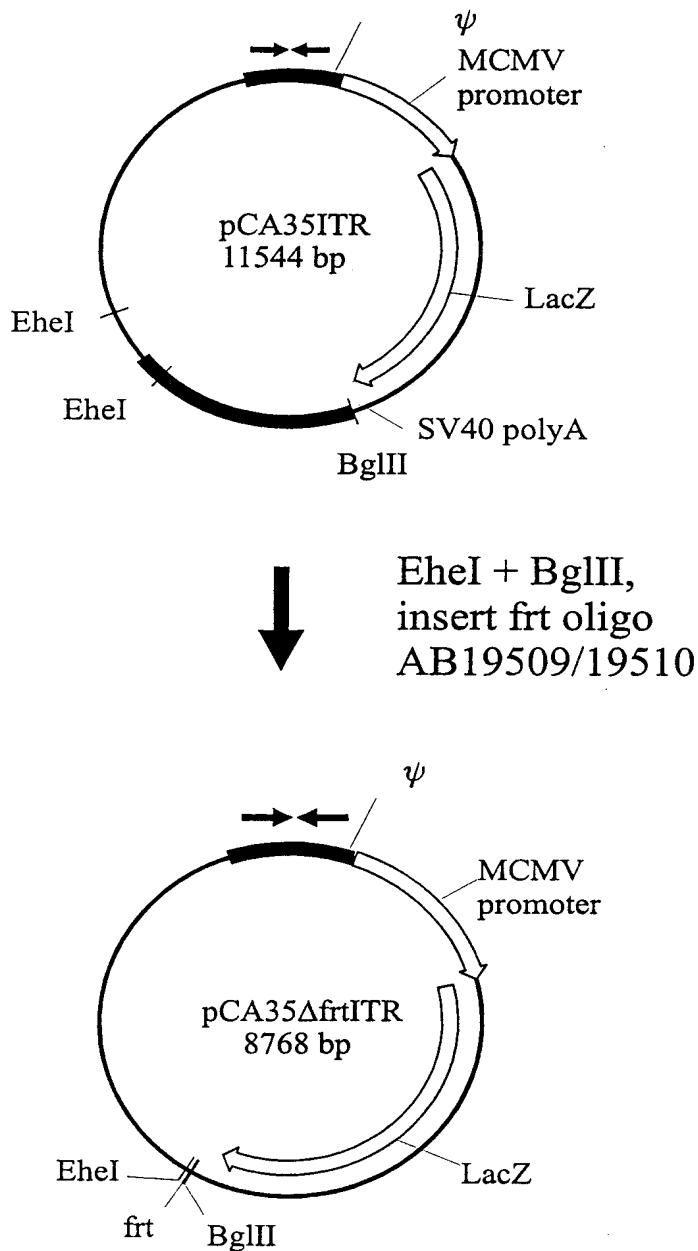


FIGURE 17A

RESCUE OF FOREIGN GENES INTO E1 BY FLP MEDIATED SITE SPECIFIC RECOMBINATION IN COTRANSFECTED 293FLP CELLS

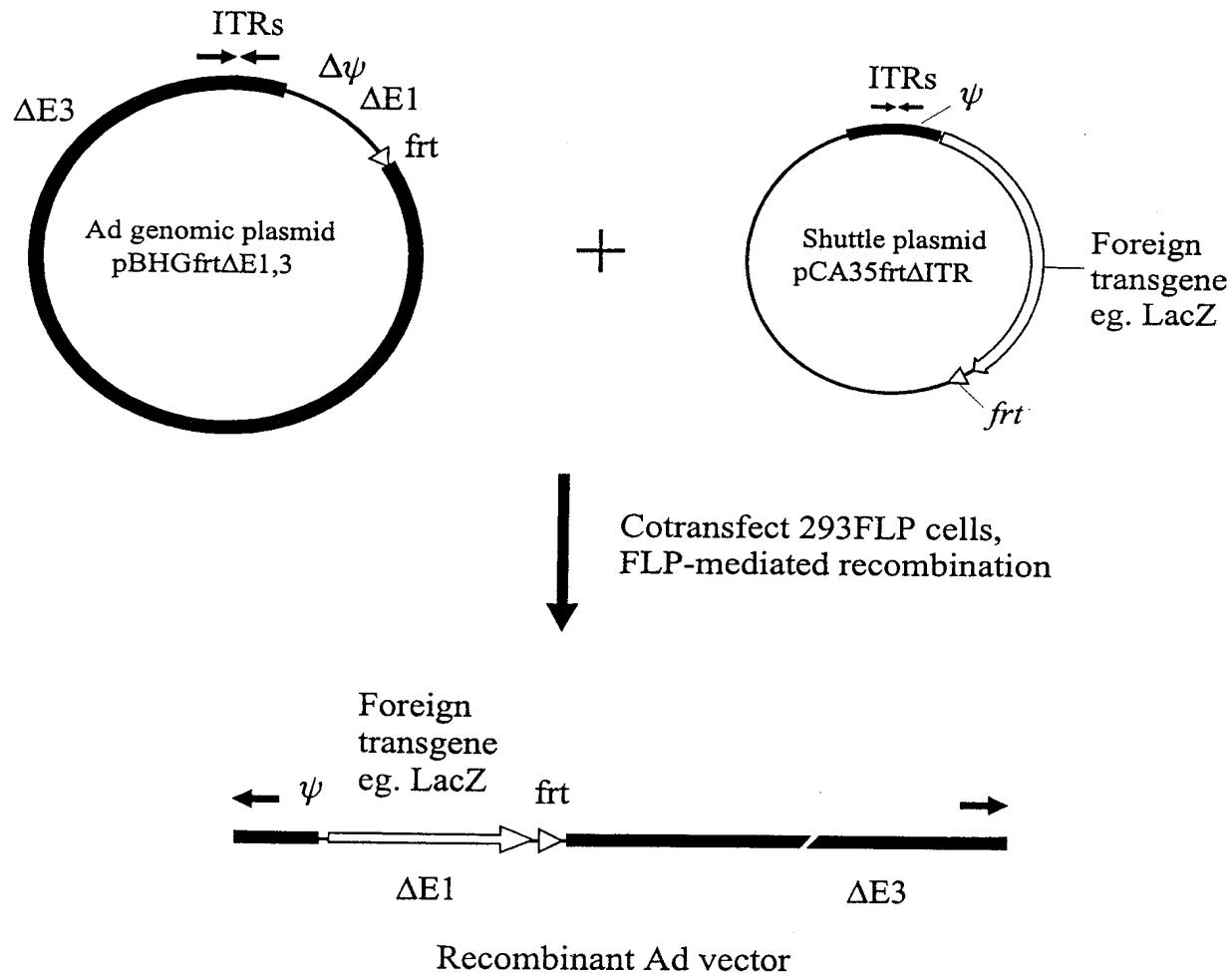


FIGURE 17B

CONSTRUCTION OF Ad GENOMIC PLASMID ENCODING FLP

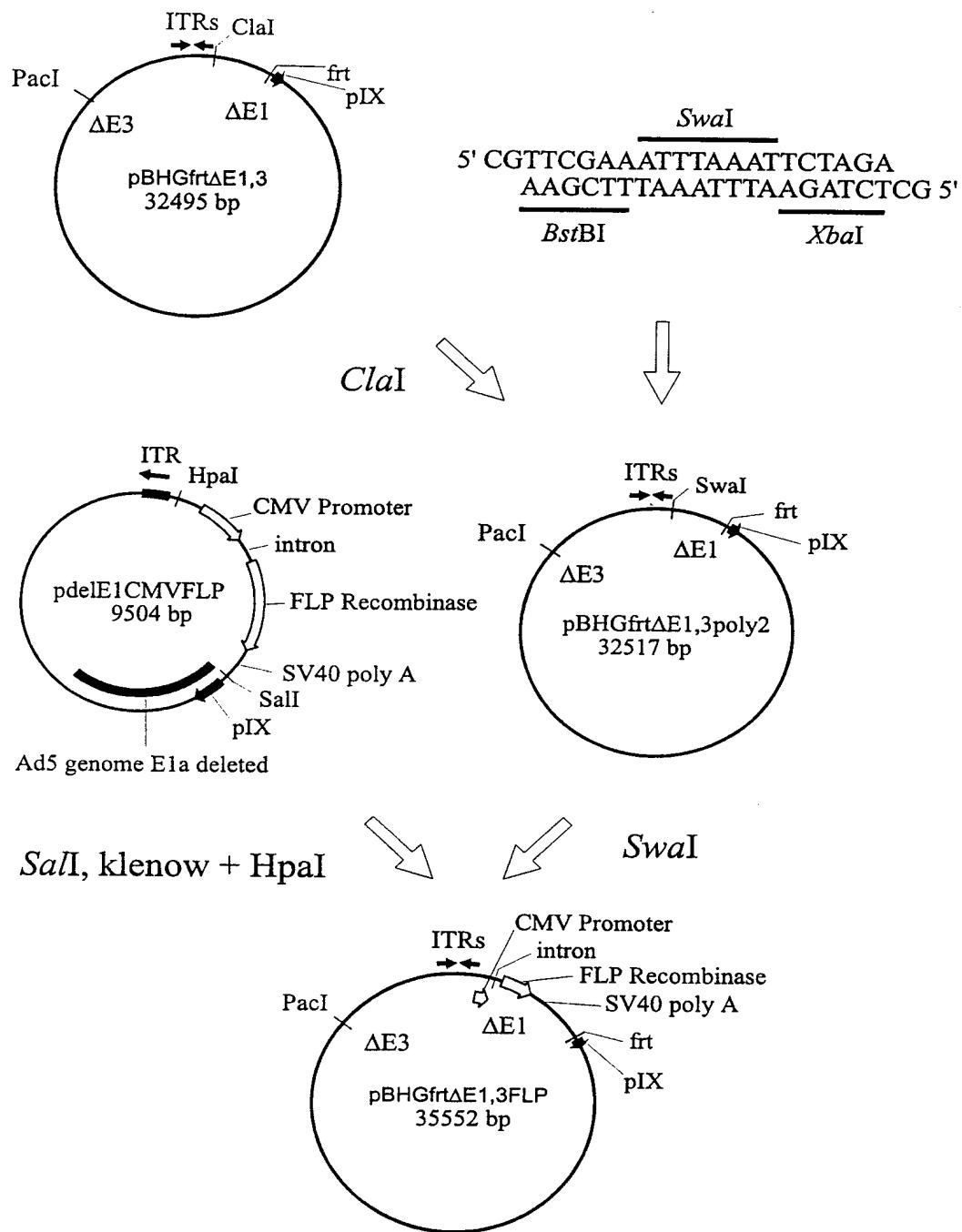


FIGURE 18

CONSTRUCTION OF SHUTTLE PLASMIDS FOR FLP-MEDIATED AD VECTOR RESCUE

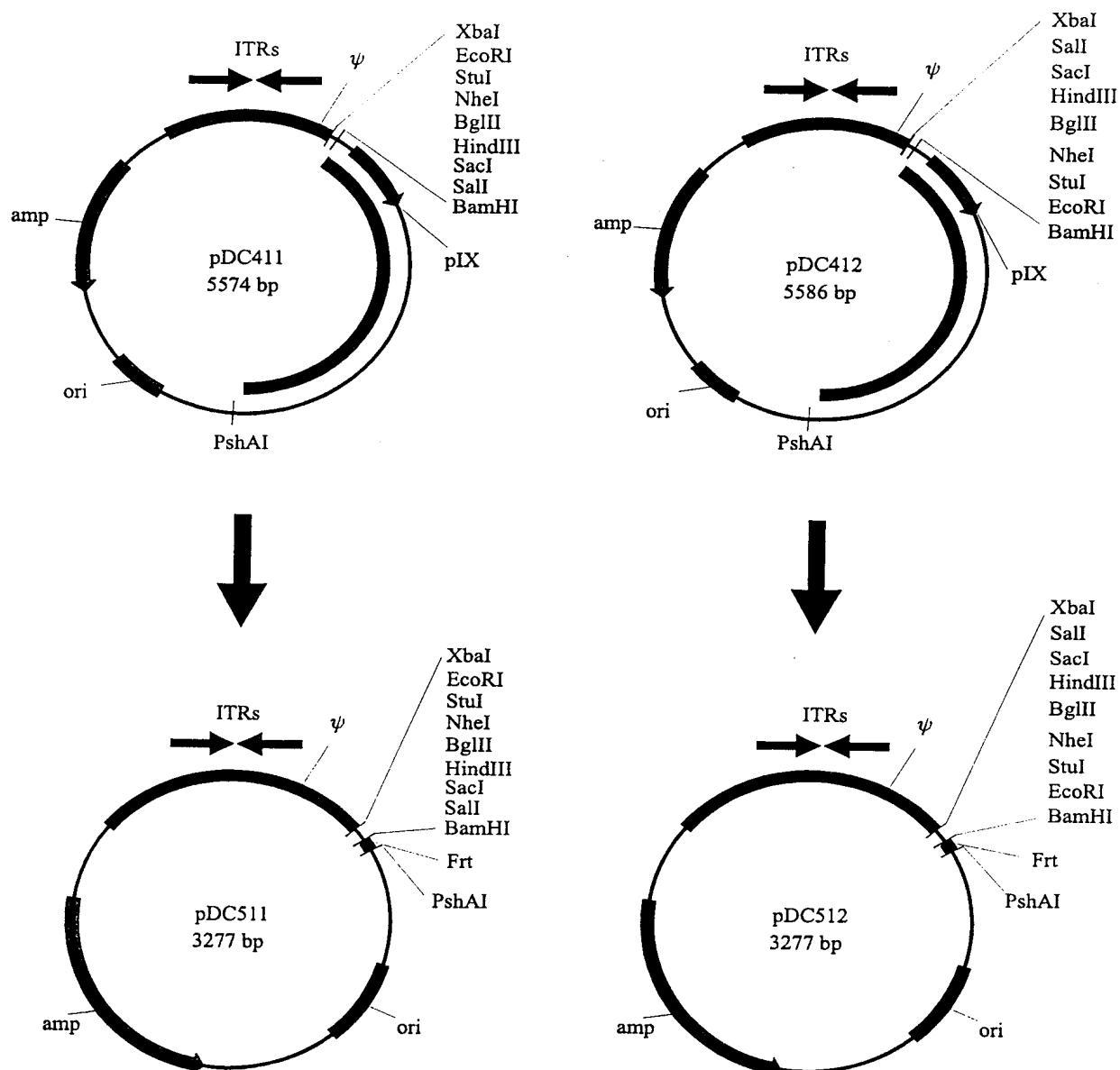


FIGURE 19A

**CONSTRUCTION OF SHUTTLE PLASMIDS FOR
FLP-MEDIATED AD VECTOR RESCUE**

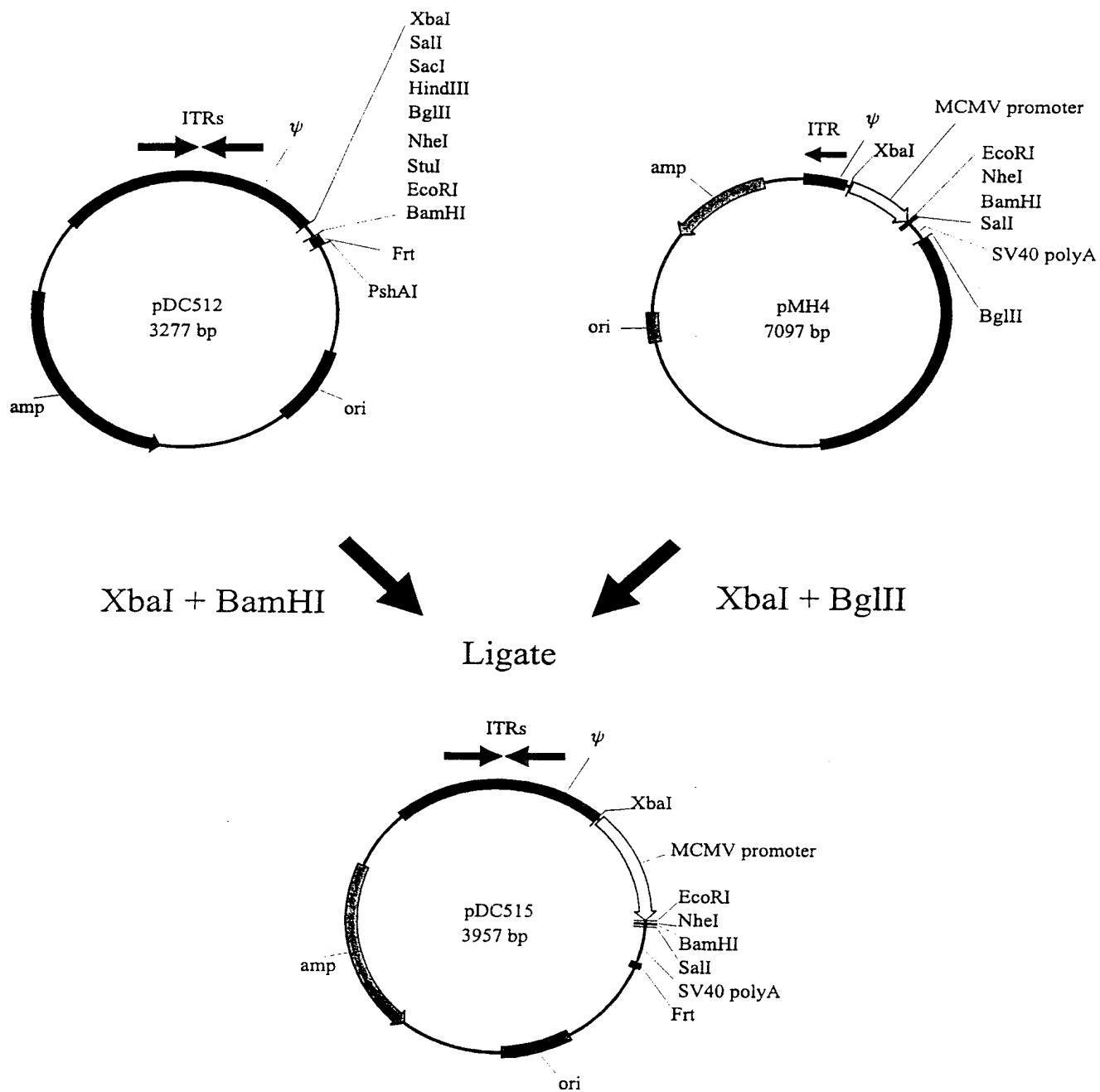


FIGURE 19B

CONSTRUCTION OF SHUTTLE PLASMIDS FOR
FLP-MEDIATED AD VECTOR RESCUE

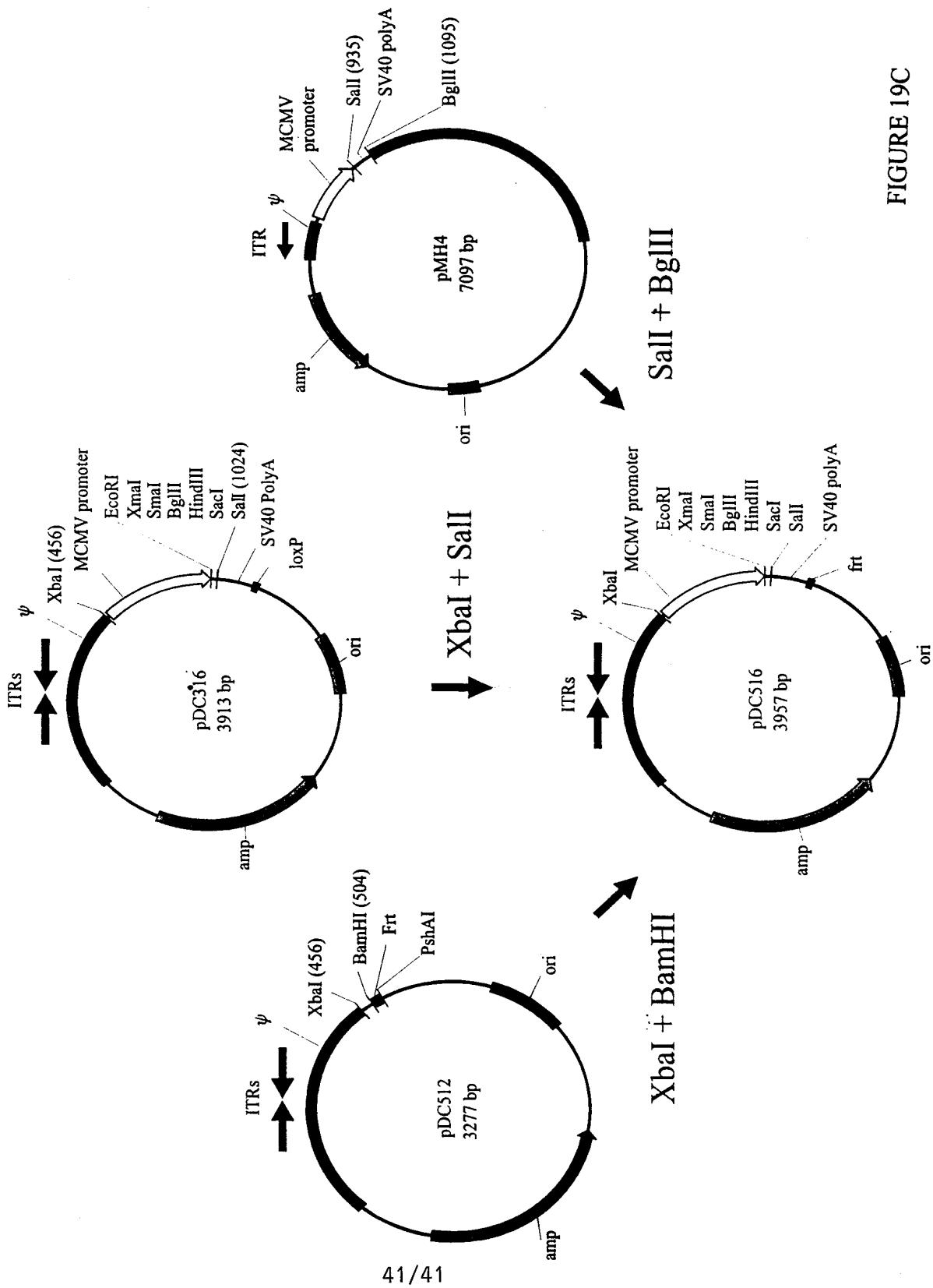


FIGURE 19C